

GREENHOUSE
EFFECT
part three

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COLOMBIA

diary of a dirty war



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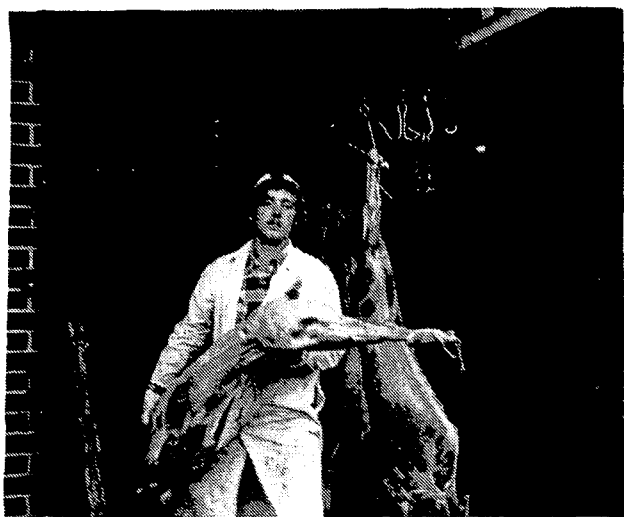


Merrill Collett

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Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos



Steve Kagan

Is the UFCW slaughtering itself?

By David Moberg

It was nearly 1:30 in the morning on January 6 when Jim Coleman left the table with his union buddies and headed to Mr. Days. The president of a United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union meatpacking local from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Coleman wanted to buttonhole UFCW international President William Wynn at the bar, a hangout for union staffers in Washington, D.C.

Coleman had come to Washington to argue against a proposed low-wage contract for a meatpacking plant in his area that would undermine his own members, perhaps closing their plant. But he was also worried about rumors that union Vice President Lewis Anderson, who was sitting at Coleman's table, would be shifted out of his job as director of the union's packing-house division. So he effusively praised Anderson's intelligence and dedication, telling Wynn, "You ought to hire 10 more just like him."

After several minutes, Wynn suddenly exploded at Anderson, a 43-year-old former packing-house worker who became division director in 1980. "How many times have I protected your ass?" Wynn demanded. "You fucked me for the last time. You're retired as of March 1." Anderson, stunned, protested that he wasn't interested in retiring or arranging any buyout deal. "I have the power to break you," Wynn reportedly said. "I'm not defending you any more from the vultures." Anderson's firing quickly triggered sharp protest inside the 1.3-million-member union, the second largest in the AFL-CIO. Added to other rumblings of discontent—the recent loss and near-loss by two vice presidents in Oakland and Denver local elec-

tions and a petition drive against leaders in Kentucky—the protest raises serious questions about the strategy and internal workings of the big union, formed in 1979 out of a merger of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and the Retail Clerks.

A week after the bar outburst, Wynn formally dismissed Anderson, officially because Wynn had "lost trust and confidence" in him and because Anderson hadn't followed proper reporting rules and wasn't a team player. More specifically—by Anderson's account—Wynn rebuked Anderson for criticizing two highly controversial, concessionary meatpacking contracts and for voting against Wynn on the selection of a Canadian director nearly three years ago. "He's trying to suggest I was stirring up people in the field [against the international]," Anderson said. "But the people didn't need to be stirred up."

Now they are even more stirred. Twelve packing-house local presidents representing 15,000 of the 97,000 workers in their division claimed that Anderson was fired for opposing Executive Vice President William Lowell's "policy of concession to employer greed" and espousal of "company unionism." Lowell, a close ally of Wynn—both of whom came from Retail Clerk locals—has gained increasing influence within the union since 1986 when he became director of collective bargaining. A clever, assertive behind-the-scenes operator, Lowell can be charming or, as an ally described him, "a madman."

An industry butchered: The workers who slaughter and process the nation's meat have gone through a convulsive decade. There were too many packing plants for the market, especially as modernized, ruthlessly anti-union companies like IBP, Inc., expanded. Operators closed more than 400 plants as established companies were reshuffled by new conglomerate owners. The union's master contract was torn to shreds as companies won concessions by preying on fears of plant closings or by resorting to bankruptcy.

Anderson argued that granting concessions would not save jobs but simply shift pressure for concessions and the threat of closing temporarily to another plant (although at times he, too, accepted concessions). But many local leaders, regional directors and threatened workers were unwilling to see their plants close for the good of all. The international never enforced a consistent policy, and Anderson made enemies—the "vultures" Wynn referred to in his barside blast—as he argued against concessions. But Anderson also came under fire from the Austin, Minn., Hormel Local P-9 and its allies in 1985-86 when he failed to support their different anti-concession strategy. The bloodletting hit hardest after 1982, then slowed in 1985. Since then the average wage in the industry has moved upward to \$8.48 an hour, still below the 1982 level.

But Anderson and his allies see ominous developments threatening that upward move, most prominently these three:

- In the spring of 1987, a week before the contract expired at a Sioux City, Iowa, local of John Morrell, local union officials at another Morrell plant in Arkansas City, Kansas, granted \$1.75-an-hour concessions. That led to a strike at Sioux City and then a sympathy strike at Sioux Falls, S.D., which are still unresolved. The company lost approximately \$50 million and faces \$35 million in back-pay penalties, but 1,000 strikers are still out of work. Jim Lyons, president of the Sioux Falls local, says the Ark City concessions, approved by Wynn and a top Lowell ally, "gave Morrell a sign there were deals to be made. That in itself showed a major weakness and gave the company the initiative to continue on."

- After a seven-month lockout/strike that ended in mid-1987, workers at the Dakota City, Neb., IBP plant—at the time the only one of 15 IBP sites organized by the UFCW—agreed to the first permanent, non-merging two-tier wage agreement in meatpacking (the UFCW leads all unions in negotiating two-tier wage settlements). The union's gains were minimal, but during negotiations Lowell established a close relationship with IBP's determinedly anti-union managers. Research by the union and FAST (the AFL-CIO's Food and Allied Service Trades) during the strike exposed grievous health and safety violations and opened the company's chairman to charges of perjuring himself before Congress. Also, the union had launched what was supposed to be a long-term campaign to organize IBP in the fall of 1986, and its innovative tactics had begun to hurt IBP. But Lowell publicly argued that Chair-

man Robert Peterson hadn't perjured himself and helped reduce IBP's then record \$5.7 million OSHA fine to \$975,000. IBP agreed to a breakthrough safety program negotiated with the union to improve design and ergonomics in the industry. Anderson says it was "inappropriate" for the union to lobby for lower fines; Lowell's defenders (he was unavailable for an interview) say better that the money goes for safety improvements than to the U.S. Treasury.

IBP and the UFCW apparently struck another deal. The company allowed the union to win recognition with simply a check of authorization cards at its Joslin, Ill., beef plant, but the union effectively called off its IBP organizing for now, greatly demoralizing many organizers. A bare majority of workers have joined the union at Joslin, where their first union contract brought no wage increase and kept pay below many non-union IBP plants (but did guarantee overtime pay).

- Last year Hormel tried to reopen its closed slaughter operations at Austin using a subcontracted, non-union firm. The union stopped that, but it has tentatively negotiated starting pay for the slaughterhouse ranging from \$6.50 to \$7.50 an hour, compared to \$8.80 at nearby unionized plants. Coleman argues that this contract could jeopardize

INSIDE STORY

several thousand jobs in the area by undercutting wages. Lyons says Morrell told him they will reduce their already low offer if the Hormel pact is approved.

Lowell critics also claim he undermined an extremely effective 1987 strike against the profitable King Sooper grocery chain in Denver. Discounting union power, he told staff there that "the union lives at the benevolence of the employers."

Many packing-house workers blame the union's leadership as much as the companies for the new wage-cut threat. "They don't look for a reason not to give concessions to employers," Madison, Wis., local President Harry Acker said. "They look for a reason to give them. We see an operation here where the captains of the ship are fools."

Beans without bacon: Critics say Lowell argues for wage cuts, explaining that only after the baby-boom bulge works its way through the labor market can the union make wage gains. They believe the UFCW makes concessions as a strategy to preserve and expand membership. Acker said managers at one company even told him they hoped the union organized them so they could get concessions. Top UFCW leaders "think if concessions go down to \$6.50 they can get cardchecks with big [packers] like IBP and Excel," Indiana local President Ted Blevins said. "They've lost the purpose of unionism. What good does it do if they don't improve standards of living and workers hate them? They're beancounters. Survival of the organization is more important [to them] than the people they should be working for."

But a few local leaders, like Louis DeFrieze of Davenport, Iowa, reject militancy in favor of cooperation and back Wynn's decision. "This is not a socialist labor movement," he said. "This is a capitalist labor movement. You're better off if you're in accommodation rather than in conflict." Critics of Anderson claim he has led meatpackers into long, futile and costly strikes and has not made adequate use of other tactics.

Anderson's backers talk of the need for more accountability, structural reform and direct election of officers. Now there are built-in conflicts of authority. Also, top officers are chosen every five years at a convention where nearly half the delegates are paid local or international staff. The dissident group must fight tough odds: union structure weighted against members and low union awareness among its largely part-time retail workforce.

"You're dealing with an organization that is absolutely not democratic," Anderson said. "You're dealing with an organization that is embracing management and damn close to collaboration."

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By Salim Muwakkil

LAST MONTH'S SUPREME COURT DECISION THAT killed a Richmond, Va., set-aside plan sent shudders through the civil rights community and resurrected the argument of racial reparations as a legal justification for affirmative action.

The high court's 6-3 ruling overturned a 1983 Richmond law that channeled 30 percent of the city's public works funds to businesses owned by non-whites. The majority opinion, written by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, said the set-aside arrangement violated the constitutional rights of white contractors to equal protection of the law (see *In These Times*, Feb. 1).

"The Richmond plan denies certain citizens the opportunity to compete for a fixed percentage of public contracts based solely upon their race," O'Connor wrote in her opinion. The ordinance was enacted by the Richmond City Council in 1983 after a study found that only two-thirds of 1 percent of the city's construction contracts had been awarded to minority-owned businesses. Half of Richmond's population is black.

Strict scrutiny: But the court found no compelling evidence that racial discrimination existed. "An amorphous claim that there has been past discrimination in a particular industry cannot justify the use of an unyielding racial quota," O'Connor wrote. The court's lone female concluded that in order for affirmative-action programs to be constitutionally valid, they must remedy specific, "identified discrimination." Government policies that distinguish on the basis of race must now be subject to a judicial analysis termed "strict scrutiny."

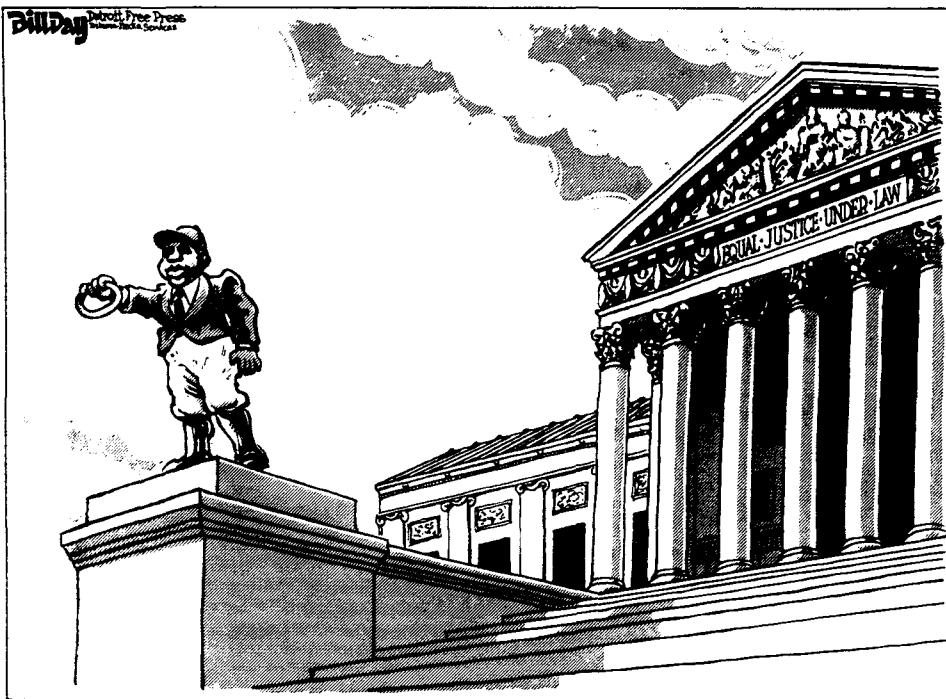
This means that all such programs must now be shown to be designed to remedy specific forms of racial discrimination in order to withstand a court challenge. The court will not automatically favor laws with race-based benefits, even if their purpose is to redress historical wrongs. While O'Connor conceded that some narrowly tailored racial-preference programs may occasionally be necessary, she said all race-based programs are suspect.

"The guarantee of equal protection cannot mean one thing when applied to one individual and something else when applied to a person of another color," O'Connor wrote. Joining O'Connor were Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices Anthony Kennedy, John Paul Stevens, Anthony Scalia—who wrote a separate opinion—and Justice Byron White. Justices Thurgood Marshall, William Brennan Jr. and Harry Blackmun dissented.

Voice of dissent: By downplaying the difference between policies that seek to remedy prior racism and those that are racist, this ruling makes explicit the Reaganesque notion that the U.S. is now a color-blind society and can avoid confronting its racist past. In his spirited dissent, Justice Thurgood Marshall argued that the ruling "marks a deliberate and giant step backward in this court's affirmative-action jurisprudence."

Assailing the majority for "constitutionalizing its wishful thinking" that racism is a thing of the past, the court's lone African-American justice said the ruling "sounds a full-scale retreat" from the court's race-conscious remedial efforts.

It is a special irony that the majority opin-



Affirming inaction: court just says no to U.S. history

ion is based on the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, one of three so-called "Reconstruction amendments" designed specifically to assist ex-slaves—all of whom were black. According to O'Connor, however, "The standard of review under the equal protection clause is not dependent on the race of those burdened or benefited by a particular classification."

Most observers seem certain the judgment will provoke a series of challenges to current set-aside programs in effect in 36 states and 200 local governments. "This ruling creates an atmosphere that enables these various programs to be eliminated at all levels," said Dominic Ozanne, president of the Ozanne Construction Company in Cleveland, Ohio, and board member of the national Association of Minority Contractors.

Bad homework: However, there are some who believe the ruling's damage potential is low. Clarence Page, a black *Chicago Tribune* columnist who is also a member of the paper's editorial board, said the ruling certainly is not the death knell for affirmative action. "The opinion recognized, unequivocally, the need for some race-based remedies. [Judge] Scalia was left out there on his own arguing against any race-based programs."

Page said the Richmond City Council simply failed to do its homework in making its case for set-asides. "This ruling follows in

the tradition of *Bakke* [a Supreme Court decision in which the court invalidated an affirmative action plan at the University of California] and the moderate opinions of Justice [Lewis] Powell; it's not yet an expression of the right-wing judicial legacy we feared Reagan would leave."

But according to most experts and Marshall's dissent, the "strict scrutiny" standard is so stringent that many programs may not be able to withstand a court challenge. What's more, many Reagan appointees will be among the judges determining the strictness of scrutiny in upcoming affirmative action cases; he named half the sitting federal judges during his eight-year term.

According to a January 25 *New York Times* analysis by Linda Greenhouse, the strict scrutiny standard has been difficult to meet. "As the Supreme Court has classically applied the test in judging public acts of overt racial discrimination, only one such action has ever withstood strict scrutiny analysis," she wrote. "That was the federal government's forcible removal of Japanese-Americans to prison camps during World War II."

Reparations: At a news conference called to denounce the ruling, Rev. Jesse Jackson compared set-asides to reparations. People who have been oppressed as a group generally receive reparations from the oppressing

group, Jackson explained, citing the historical examples of Jews and Japanese-Americans. "African-Americans need reparations because of 250 years of slavery, another 100 years of legal segregation and ongoing discrimination."

Jackson's argument is a popular one among black activists these days. The notion that African-Americans are entitled to reparations for years of servitude and discrimination has been revitalized and is being debated in forums across the country. The debate has been inflamed by the set-aside ruling.

"Black people are here because of slavery," says Craig Ford, longtime civil rights attorney. "Scrutiny doesn't have to be that strict to discover this fact. The basis of all affirmative action is that our forefathers were the only people brought to this country against their wills as slaves. But on top of that we then weren't allowed to own land. Instead of asking for set-asides, maybe we'd be better off demanding the market value of 40 acres and a mule."

And this argument is not mere rhetoric. Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-CA) reportedly is preparing legislation to make a case before Congress for monetary reparations for descendants of slaves. He was prodded by constituents and other blacks around the country who noted his enthusiasm in arguing for reparations for Japanese-Americans interred during the mid-'40s.

At a recent appearance at Operation PUSH headquarters in Chicago, Rep. Gus Savage (D-IL) addressed another frequently heard concern. "Have you noticed that this Supreme Court decision came just as African-Americans are consolidating power in the nation's cities?" he asked the enthusiastic PUSH audience. "Most of these set-aside programs were initiated by black mayors who were amazed by the discrimination that had gone on before their elections."

Savage is chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus' Minority Business Development Brain Trust and has been instrumental in legislation ensuring minority participation in federal contracts. "We realize that political power exists primarily to promote economic power, to facilitate the efficient and equitable production and distribution of goods and services. And business growth is key to African-American development. To take away this tool is to help keep us dependent."

"Minority contractors around the country are quite concerned about the ruling," said Glenn Harston, president of Black Contractors United. "In fact, I've heard a lot of talk about going into the street and taking direct action like we did in the '60s." Former presidential candidate Jackson said he's planning a demonstration in Richmond to protest the ruling. "I'm pretty sure we can get a good crowd. I won Virginia."

The Supreme Court decision doesn't apply to affirmative-action plans in the private sector nor to federal minority business enterprise (MBE) programs. But the logic of the ruling is sure to incite challenges in those sectors. And even if, as the *Chicago's Tribune's* Page argues, set-aside programs are not the best method to aid economic equity—"they tend to benefit well-to-do minorities exclusively and they're rife with fraud"—O'Connor's reasoning is equally devastating to kinder and gentler attempts at affirmative action.

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By Joel Bleifuss

That'll teach 'em

Last December the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fined Rockwell International \$47,500 for polluting the area around the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons facility with dioxin-laden polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Rockwell is contracted by the Department of Energy (DOE) to operate the plant that makes the plutonium triggers for nuclear bombs. That \$47,500 record fine may not seem like much of a penalty, but it is the largest fine the agency has ever imposed against a government operation. Rockwell, however, won't be out one thin dime. Under the company's DOE contract, all environmental penalties are picked up by the taxpayer.

Trimming excess humans

"We pay less per hour than we did five years ago," bragged Charles F. Knight, chairman of Emerson Electric Company recently. "I don't know how many other companies in corporate America can say that. We are ready to play." Knight made these remarks late last year before an international business conference at St. Louis University. Last June Knight decided to save money on government defense contracts by transferring about 250 St. Louis-based union jobs to non-union plants in Florida and Mexico. Knight defended his decision this way: "A lot of people cringe, including my kids.... The reason we move jobs is to protect jobs in this country. We move low-skill jobs to protect high-skill jobs.... In the last five years we closed 49 plants and moved 6,000 jobs.... We were getting rid of those bad investments."

Excess farmers? Try 2,4-D

Ignoring three recent studies that linked the herbicide 2,4-D to cancer in humans, the EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel recently reclassified the pesticide as a category "D" carcinogen, which means that it considers research on the effects of the pesticide inconclusive. 2,4-D, a product spin-off of chemical warfare research in World War II, is the No. 3 pesticide in the U.S. In 1986 the National Cancer Institute (NCI) found that farmers in Kansas exposed to 2,4-D and two other chemically similar (phenoxy) herbicides had a higher than normal incidence of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. In spring 1988 a second NCI study found that farmers in Nebraska were similarly affected. And in August 1988 a Swedish researcher released a follow-up study supporting his earlier finding that linked 2,4-D-type herbicides to soft-tissue sarcomas in humans. Furthermore, West Germany researchers found dioxin in the samples of 2,4-D they analyzed. It is not just the farmers that are affected; groundwater contamination by pesticide residues threatens whole communities. According to environmental geologist George Hallberg of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, more than 25 percent of Iowans drink water containing pesticide contaminants. All of which raises this question: why has the EPA ignored this data and downgraded the carcinogen rating of 2,4-D? The agency's official response is that more research on 2,4-D is needed, particularly on studies on animals. But Diane Baxter of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) characterizes the EPA's failure to regulate the pesticide as "beyond incredible." She told *In These Times*, "Usually we find ourselves in the opposite position. Usually we have solid animal data, and industry and the government tell us to stop comparing men and women to rats and mice. In this case we have ample evidence of a link to human cancer, and the EPA has told environmentalists and researchers to go away, the animal data is not strong enough." Possibly, the agency has a hidden agenda. 2,4-D is sold the world over under more than 100 trade names. It can be found in any K-Mart and is often used by lawn-care companies. In the late '70s, the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the National Agricultural Chemical Association joined together to form the 2,4-D Taskforce to protect this pesticide from federal regulation. Baxter explains, "The EPA has found that it is not a good idea to regulate compounds that are likely to be very well defended by industry."

Countering chemical dependence

A survey by the Food Marketing Institute, a supermarket industry trade organization, has found that 76 percent of consumers are worried about pesticides in their food. Jeremy Iggers reports in the *Minneapolis Star & Tribune* that some 400 supermarkets in the



A calf bends an ear to receive an injection of a growth-promoting hormone pellet.

Trade war baloney masks the meat of the problem

The U.S. beef industry and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are reacting with shock and dismay to the European Economic Community's (EEC) ban on American beef raised with growth-promoting steroids.

EEC nations have banned the steroid-tainted beef, citing public health risks. But the U.S. claims the issue is entirely political, an attempt by the EEC to rid itself of a beef surplus.

Washington's case against the EEC, however, does not seem to be based on fact. While it's true Europe has a surplus of meat, it has a shortage of "variety meat": tongue, liver, tripe and kidney. Eighty percent of America's meat exports to Europe are variety meats, products that do not sell well in the U.S.

And despite the USDA and the beef industry's apparent surprise at the EEC action, the steroid issue is not a new one. The EEC ban was first announced in January 1987. Furthermore, during the Carter presidency, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed a similar ban of its own.

The steroids used in beef production are usually some form of estrogen. The hormone is supposed to be implanted, in pellet form, in the ears of cattle—since that part of the animal is never eaten. Until 1979 the most popular brand of growth hormone contained a synthetic estrogen called DES—which was once commonly used to prevent miscarriages but is now known to be a carcinogenic compound. As Orville

Schell pointed out in his 1984 exposé *Modern Meat*, some experts link DES-injected chicken to the onset of premature puberty in a group of Puerto Rican school children who ate the poultry. Similar cases have occurred in Italy and West Germany, according to EEC officials.

The FDA banned DES in 1979, and went even further to question the safety of all beef steroid implants. The administration cited studies linking estrogen to cancer in lab animals—regardless of whether the estrogen was "organic," or synthetic like DES. According to Dr. David Greenman, principal investigator of a 1979 study for the National Center for Toxicological Research, the endocrine system in any mammal is highly sensitive to additional loads of estrogen, even when the implanted hormones match its own. Greenman told *In These Times* that scientists now commonly accept a causal relationship between increased estrogen loads and cancer.

The Carter FDA proposed that more research be done on whether steroid-tainted beef can cause cancer when eaten by humans. The industry's assault on the FDA's proposal came in two forms. First, steroid manufacturers filed tremendous amounts of favorable data about their products. But the studies—conducted by the industry itself—analyzed only the estrogen found in meat, not the full impact of that meat on the human body. The studies also neglected to consider the effects of steroids implanted directly into the flesh, rather than the ear, of the animal. No studies exist that assess this common and illegal practice that results in markedly higher estrogen residues in cattle.

Second, according to Rod Leonard, former USDA administrator, the

Reagan-appointed FDA came up with a new formula to determine what substances should be approved for the market—one death per one million consumers. Leonard told *In These Times* the use of this risk/benefit ratio supplanted the traditional interpretation of the Pure Food and Drug Act, which denied approval of substances given reasonable doubt of safety to human beings.

In 1983 the Reagan administration closed its investigation of the steroid issue called for by Carter's FDA. And the FDA also lifted the one remaining regulation on the use of steroids, which required the removal of the ear implants 60 days before slaughter. The commercial feedlots, not to mention the animal-health industry, couldn't have been happier. The steroid-implant industry now enjoys a \$50 million domestic market.

By the industry's admission, some brands on the market today mimic qualities of DES due to a common chemical structure. Implants made by Eli Lilly, the West German firm Boehringer Ingelheim and Syntex contain estradiol, an estrogen derived from heifer ovaries. Some implants combine estradiol with testosterone or progesterone, suspected co-carcinogens that predispose the body to various cancers. Other companies manufacture growth-promoters synthetically, like Hoechst-Roussel of Somerville, N.J., or "naturally," like Pitman-Moore of Mundelein, Ill.

The resurrection of the steroid issue, even if shrouded as a trade dispute, worries commercial feedlot owners—and encourages small beef producers and consumer groups. The cattle industry and the USDA have two choices. First, they could refuse to comply with the EEC ban and peddle \$147 million in unsold

Chris Bleifuss

meat to Korea and Mexico. But there is no guarantee that these countries would not similarly restrict steroid-implanted meat. Second, they could provide special labels for the esti-

mated 35-50 percent of American beef that is raised without steroids, thereby meeting EEC regulations and pleasing U.S. consumer groups. Of course, the problem with this

proposal is that if offered the choice, few consumers—in Europe or America—would opt for steroid-implanted meat.

—Ray Walsh

The Peace Army wants you!

This year some of those active in the U.S. peace movement have decided to "wage peace" through a new organized force, the Peace Army. In These Times invited George Jarrett, who has enlisted for a tour of duty with the army's Santa Cruz Gaia Affinity Group, to talk about life on the front.

For thousands of years the dominant force in political and social life has been organized violence. From the Roman empire to the Crusades, from Nazi Germany to Nicaragua, armies have been an enduring and decisive factor in determining how the people will live.

Beginning Sept. 1, 1989, a newly organized force—the Peace Army—will seek to challenge and reverse this trend. Waging peace as seriously as the military wages war, the Peace Army will be composed of people who enlist to spend one year engaging in direct action against first-strike nuclear weapons.

First-strike nuclear weapons, the ultimate tool of military violence, are a natural target for the Peace Army. Since the atomic bomb was first developed, the U.S. government has threatened to use its nuclear arsenal several times. The U.S.' first-strike capability was enhanced during the '70s and '80s when Congress funded a Pentagon effort to build and deploy new weapons and delivery systems like the

Trident II/D-5 missile, new anti-submarine technology and "Star Wars" anti-missile weapons.

Taking this linchpin of U.S. military strategy as its first target, the Peace Army will be an extension of the non-violent peace movement. Drawing on the tactics of peace marches, anti-war encampments and direct-action campaigns, the affinity groups that comprise the Peace Army will target one or more facilities in the country's first-strike infrastructure.

The campaign will begin in September with a preparation and training period. Peace Army recruits will develop the skills needed to build and sustain a powerful community of resistance, such as consensus decision-making, food preparation, back-country tactics and non-violence training. Thus prepared, the Peace Army will descend upon the facility chosen for the first actions. There they will set up a community to sustain the army as it plans and executes non-violent actions. These actions will be intended to symbolically and directly challenge nuclear weapons development through blockades, neighborhood outreach, back-country occupations, poster and direct disarmament.

The organization of the Peace Army will be based on affinity groups composed of five to 20 people. Armywide decisions will be made by a council of the smaller groups' representatives called "spokes." The groups will act autonomously or in small clusters to

plan and execute their actions.

The Peace Army plans that its actions will be reinforced by supporters around the country who will be responsible for raising money, generation media publicity and providing support. These peace partisans will also be charged with planning and executing demonstrations and actions in solidarity with the Peace Army.

At the moment organizers are faced with the task of raising the Peace Army. The First Strike Prevention Project of Santa Cruz, Calif., has already gathered the names of some 200 people around the country and the world who support the Peace Army. Several groups, including Seeds of Peace, American Peace Test and the Mobilization for Survival, have endorsed the army's formation.

The next step in this ambitious program is to identify local organizers in regions across the country who will recruit Peace Army soldiers, form Peace Army affinity groups and, of course, find the necessary financial and personal backing. On February 18-20 local organizers will meet in Cleveland, Ohio, to set the agenda for the first Peace Army "spokes council," which will be held in Las Vegas on April 5 and 6, immediately before the American Peace Test's "Reclaim the Test Site II" action.

For more information write Peace Army Catalyst Collective, c/o FSPP, Box 7061, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, or call (408) 427-0322.

—George Jarrett

Yankee oil, go home

VANCOUVER, CANADA—Canadian environmentalists were outraged to discover that a Washington state official ordered a barge leaking heavy viscous engine oil towed to sea, where currents took the estimated 220,000-gallon spill onto the beaches of British Columbia.

Several thousand birds and untold numbers of crabs, clams and other sea life have been killed in the aftermath of the December spill. Beaches have been fouled for several hundred miles up and down the Pacific Coast. Fishing has had to be halted in some areas. With each storm the shoreline has been repeatedly re-oiled as previously submerged oil contaminates one of the most diverse but fragile ecosystems in Canada.

Although there have been larger oil spills in the world, Jim Masyk, superintendent of Canada's Pacific Rim National Park, says, "We're learning how devastating even the so-called small spill is. Any spill of magnitude is something you should

be serious about."

The trouble began on December 23 when the oil barge collided with its tug outside Grays Harbor, 90 miles southwest of Seattle. Lew Kittle of the Washington Department of Ecology ordered the U.S.-owned barge to be towed away to avoid damaging the harbor's sensitive environment.

Kittle defends his action, saying that it was only a recommendation and that the Coast Guard "could have brought the barge in if they disagreed." Kittle also says that he "didn't know the oil was going to reach British Columbia. We had no idea that would have happened."

Meanwhile, hundreds of volunteers, many of whom are native people whose livelihoods depend on the sea, have been helping government workers remove the oil and debris from the beaches.

There have also been complaints that the governments of Canada and British Columbia have not responded adequately to the crisis. Roberta Olenick, a zoologist who helped with the cleanup, says, "The current oil disaster has provided a truly impressive demonstration

of our complete inability to handle even this supposedly minor spill. Despite this shortcoming, both federal and provincial governments are planning to lift the moratorium on oil exploration off the West Coast in the very near future."

The Canadian government has admitted that it was unprepared for an oil spill of this magnitude and has committed itself to developing strategies to handle any future spills. But British Columbia Premier William Vander Zalm, of the right-wing Social Credit Party, ducked the question of offshore drilling, saying, "Whenever we talk about environmental concerns, we can at the same time consider the impact on the economy."

On January 20 British Columbia and Washington state agreed to set up an international committee to ensure that any future oil spills are handled quickly. Canadian officials say that they expect either the barge company or Washington state to pay compensation for the damage caused by the oil spill and that they will assist with filing any claims.

—Peter Prongos

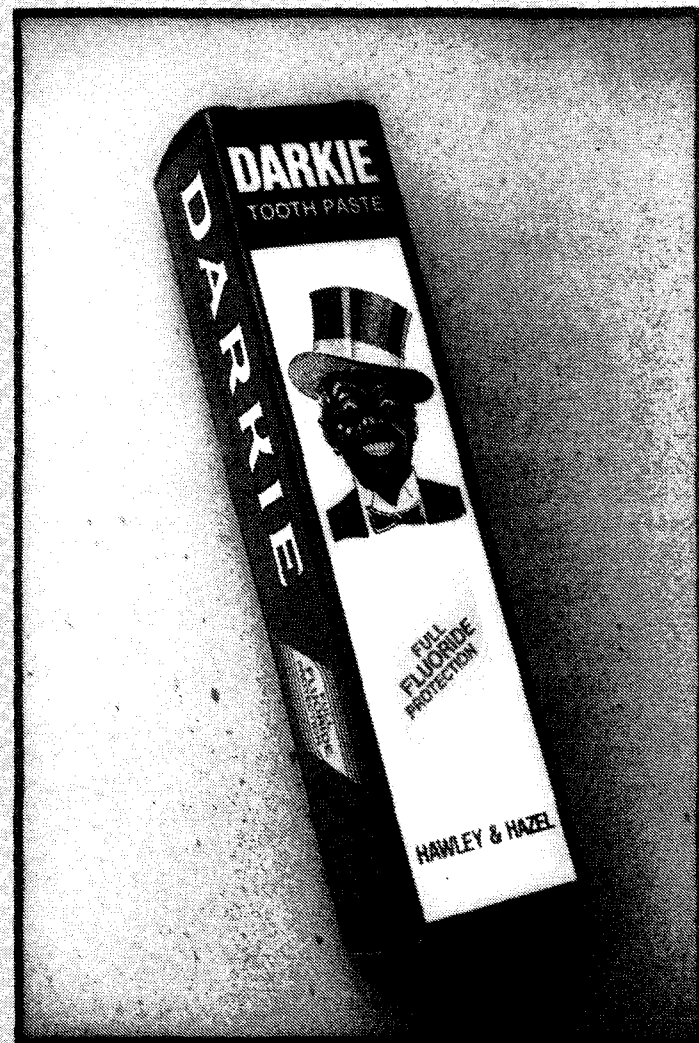
U.S. are trying to meet the public's desire for chemically safe food by hiring the NutriClean company of Oakland, Calif., to monitor pesticide residues on their produce. Stores that have bought the NutriClean testing service say that their produce sales have increased. The large corporate growers want nothing to do with such private testing, preferring instead to rely on the industry-friendly Food and Drug Administration. According to NutriClean President Stan Rhodes, most of the companies buying his service are smaller, family-owned operations that get their produce from the smaller growers. Says Rhodes, "The large chains which buy from the large growers are chemically dependent, and they are not going to get off of the stuff easily."

Too smart for her own good

Clay, W.Va., Mayor Sharooz Jamie recently fired water system clerk Betty Murphy for posting a sign in her city hall office that read: "Do you want to speak to the man in charge, or to the woman who knows what's going on?" The Associated Press reports that Jamie discharged Murphy, who is also city recorder, because he didn't think funny signs belonged on city hall walls. Said Jamie, "City Hall is not a joking place."

Spared the mini-series

CBS is making a four-hour TV docu-drama on the life of Oliver North, the Iran-contra conspirator now on trial in Washington, D.C. Oliver North, the movie, will begin with his childhood and conclude with the Iran-contra hearings and his rise to media stardom. In between there promises to be plenty of action. The dense swampland along the Santa Ana River in Riverside County, Calif., will provide the ideal jungle setting for shooting the war-zone scenes of Vietnam, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The only problem is that the Santa Ana swamp is the nesting ground of the only surviving flock of Bell's vireo, a tiny songbird on the nation's endangered species list. Perhaps North, indirectly, will be able to do to the Bell's vireo what he failed to do to Nicaragua.



In black and white

Colgate-Palmolive Company refuses to bow to critics who say its Darkie Tooth Paste, marketed in the Third World, promotes racist stereotypes. The company did drop the "r" from the name of its product in some East Asian countries, but on the toothpaste box the Chinese translation of the English "Dakkie" remained "black man's toothpaste," according to *The New Internationalist*. And when the toothpaste debuts in Japan—a country where Sambo-like dolls were a recent rage—it will do so under a new name, Mouth Jazz, but with the original Darkie logo.

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

HALF A CENTURY AGO SOCIALISM WAS SAID to be blocked in France because it ran up against the "wall of money"—the obstruction of the financially privileged. Today French Socialists again find themselves up against a wall of money, but this time it's their own.

Last November 21 the nationalized French multinational Pechiney announced its purchase of Triangle Industries in order to acquire its subsidiary, American National Can. If the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had not started snooping into stock movements just before the purchase, this would simply have been patriotically celebrated as a French "win" in the international economic war game.

The SEC's morbid curiosity revealed that some were bigger winners than others. In particular, two close chums of President François Mitterrand, Max Théret and Roger-Patrice Pelat, made windfall profits by buying huge blocks of Triangle stock before Pechiney paid much more for them. Thanks to the scandal, the public made the acquaintance of Pelat, a dashing wartime buddy of Mitterrand's who was with the future president in a German World War II POW camp and has apparently been hanging around ever since. Théret has entertained the president at his chateau (acquired in the course of a fruitful self-made-man career) and accompanied him on major state visits. He was already prominent as the main financial benefactor of the defunct socialist daily *Le Matin*.

The search is on for whoever, in Pechiney or the finance ministry, supplied the insider tip to Mitterrand's close associates.

Conservative opposition politicians had a field day citing old Mitterrand quotations on "the corrupting power of money." For instance, at the founding congress of his Socialist Party (PS) in 1971, Mitterrand delivered a passionate diatribe against "all the powers of money, money that corrupts, money that buys, money that crushes, money that kills, money that ruins and money that rots the very conscience of men!"

The financial scandal currently lapping around the Elysée palace is nothing compared to the financial scandal rocking Greece in the last days of Andreas Papandreu. And it seems a venial sin compared to more spectacular scandals that have flourished in recent years in the U.S. or West Germany, not to mention Italy's chronic corruption. But it comes along just in time to deepen the demoralization already spreading through the ranks of the PS.

The *Wall Street Journal* complained of the SEC's "young radicals" running around the world "destabilizing friendly governments." The *Wall Street Journal* may worry that the SEC's zeal risks discrediting not only a friendly government but the stock market itself. A certain number of French people may consider "inside trading" a pleonasm. Who in France trades if not insiders?

Onward the crass struggle: Perhaps the scandal's most damaging effect to the PS will be to cast a glaring light on the contrast between Socialists up on the top of business and the administration and those down below in public service who are feeling more and more neglected, financially and morally.



Socialists learn money cannot buy happiness

The '80s have seen a vast, successful propaganda campaign throughout Europe in favor of the virtues of free enterprise. In southern Europe, Socialists have often been entrusted with this ideological task. Mitterrand, Felipe Gonzalez and Bettino Craxi have been supported by modernizing sectors of French, Spanish and Italian finance, who grasped the superior credibility of parties calling themselves "socialist" in the pedag-

The Socialists' recent money scandal has come along just in time to deepen demoralization already spreading through party ranks. The party's condition is being described as "Beirut."

ogy of pro-capitalism. The media have spearheaded this effort. They have made heroes of dynamic businessmen who "win," like Bernard Tapie, taken onto the Socialist candidates' list in Marseilles.

In the past few months the backlash demoralization of public-sector employees has begun to express itself and is not likely to stop soon. Branded as "privileged" for their job security in a time of unemployment, public-sector employees have kept relatively quiet as their wages stagnated and purchasing power declined. But when Mitterrand was triumphantly re-elected for a second seven-year term last May, bringing in his wake a new Socialist government headed by Prime Minister Michel Rocard, those who voted left expected to get something in return.

Instead, intent on "opening the center" and luring conservative politicians into the presidential majority, Rocard continued to put budgetary rigor ahead of complaints from underpaid functionaries.

French labor has the lowest level of union-

ization in Europe—about 10 percent. This does not stop French employees from organizing their own strikes when they feel the need. French nurses organized a model strike last October. Royally, Mitterrand sympathized publicly with these fine public servants, admitting that they had been shamefully neglected for years and were underpaid and overworked. Nevertheless, Rocard told them the money wasn't there to do them justice. The French Confederation of Democratic Labor (CFDT), which a decade ago championed "self-management socialism" along with Rocard, actually expelled its Paris health-workers branch for helping lead the strike. This suicidal act of a declining organization amazed even those observers who had already concluded that the CFDT was more supportive of strikes in Poland than in France.

The French Socialist Party has its historical roots less in the labor movement than in the public sector and in the radical republican ideal of public service, especially pronounced in the national education system. But as the PS became a "governing party" in the early '80s, it enjoyed an influx of ambitious junior executives and yuppies in search of fruitful contacts. A gap has been opening ever wider between the well-paid, high-living Socialists in the nationalized industries or other choice top positions and the mass of public servants whose devotion to the good of society is badly paid not only in money but also in esteem. Teachers, nurses and subway-repair workers all feel their socially useful work is despised by a world that admires only tough, self-promoting "winners" whose success is measured in terms of money.

As prime minister, Rocard has been trying to promote social reconciliation, considered necessary to prepare France for the single European market coming in 1992. Having taken office when the Pacific island territory of New Caledonia seemed to be on the verge of civil war, Rocard's success in getting leaders of the French settlers and the native Melanesians to accept a compromise putting

off final decision on the status of New Caledonia for 10 years was presented with some justification as a shining illustration of the Rocard method. But Rocard tried to squeeze too much out of this success by calling a national referendum last November 6 to confirm the accord. Only 37 percent of the voters went to the polls—a record low turnout.

Infantile disorders: Rocard's other big project has been to put through a "minimum insertion income" guaranteeing everyone a total income of 2,000 francs (about \$350) per month on the condition that they fill out about nine pages of forms and try to "reinsert themselves" into society by seeking gainful employment. This is not enough to clear the *clochards* off the heat grilles. At least it sets the principle of providing an income for the hopelessly unemployed in what looks like a time of hopeless unemployment. But it is not particularly a socialist measure. The conservatives were planning something similar had they won the elections. Neither of these achievement touches most voters directly.

The Socialist Party has been infantilized by its dependence on Mitterrand to win elections that the left would otherwise lose. An election always seems to be coming up—legislative, regional, municipal—obliging the party to keep quiet so that Mitterrand can work his wizardry on the public undisturbed.

The rival currents, which are supposed to ensure democratic debate in the PS, in practice facilitate the reduction of political debate to an instrument of factional war, without any attempt to persuade or reach consensus. Individual opinions are only flags denoting one or another current, each headed by a leader who sets the current's doctrine and uses it to advance his career. The pro-Mitterrand current has split at least three ways, among rivals to the succession. Its most aggressive new faction centers around militants from the media-conscious association "SOS Racisme," many of them veterans of Trotskyist organizations who have put their factional fighting skills in the service of former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius. Having lost out to Rocard for the prime minister job this time around, Fabius felt cheated when the PS refused to choose him as new party leader, even though he was Mitterrand's favorite. Socialists feared Fabius' "rich boy" image would alienate the underprivileged.

His followers have been giving the lie to that image by supporting the various strikes, with the scarcely secret hope that incapacity to master labor unrest will bring down Rocard and put Fabius back on the inside track to succeed Mitterrand. In recent weeks, as various currents have fought for places on the candidate lists for the municipal council elections coming up in March, factions have allied with each other to block their rivals without regard for policy issues on the basis of rising personal animosities. "It's Beirut," is a characteristic comment on the state of the Socialist Party.

Morale is low in the grass roots. Recent by-elections bring worrisome news for the Socialists. Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right National Front has been doing badly. Without the threat of National Front success to goad them to the polls, many voters with leftist sentiments may express their disappointment by not voting in next month's municipal elections. □

In recent weeks In These Times has probed the looming ecological disaster known as the "greenhouse effect." Writer Dick Russell has analyzed its causes and effects (see In These Times, Jan. 11), and has recounted the story of the federal government's dismal failure to address the problem (see In These Times, Jan. 25).

The situation appears so overwhelming and depressing that it's tempting to throw up one's hands in hopelessness and continue the energy-guzzling ways. But don't despair. The conclusion of the three-part series examines ways that we can help bring about the necessary changes. National legislative efforts and international agreements are important, of course. But in addition to forcing government and industry to move faster, we also must alter our personal habits. This does not mean that we need to give up electricity and automobiles and return to a pre-industrial society. It does mean that we must learn to use energy more efficiently and push for renewed development and deployment of non-polluting power sources.

The commitments we make every day will determine whether our children and their children inherit a healthy planet or an irreparably polluted one. The choice is ours.

By Dick Russell

SCENARIO ONE: *DATeline 2010*. AMERICAN cities, largely absent of smog, are now lined with trees of numerous varieties. Homes and offices use one-quarter the amount of energy that they consumed only 21 years before, yet an efficiency-conscious economy has helped achieve even greater prosperity. Electric vehicles, powered primarily by the sun, cruise the streets, while the remaining gasoline-fed automobiles now get at least 50 and as many as 120 miles per gallon. Centers for the recycling of paper, aluminum, plastic and other products provide jobs for thousands of people. A network of small but productive farms operating without petrochemical pesticides or fertilizers dot the rural landscape. Public schools, churches and other organizations busily promote additional tree-planting efforts. Abroad, an "Ecology Corps," modeled after the Peace Corps of the '60s, assists in helping developing nations implement similar programs.

Scenario two: *Dateline 2010*. The output of carbon dioxide (CO₂) entering the atmosphere from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas has risen another 38 percent in only 21 years. Millions of lush acres of tropical rain forest that once provided the womb for countless lifeforms and stabilized the Earth's atmosphere by absorbing vast amounts of CO₂ now stand barren, fallen victim to developers. Increased temperatures and shifting weather patterns have transformed the most productive breadbaskets of the world into near-deserts. Around the globe millions are homeless, facing starvation and dying of disease. Nations ravaged by drought and sea level rises frantically seek food, shelter and water for their citizens. Yet no virgin frontiers remain, so there are none to escape to, none to exploit.

The fuse is burning: Our action or inaction will usher in one of these scenarios. Unfortunately, at the moment the smart money is on the latter. Continued widespread fossil fuel use will trigger nature's response to decades of neglect, and consequently "solve" what some view as the "population problem." Much of the Earth, its atmosphere overwhelmed by CO₂ and other

EARTH NEEDS YOU

GREENHOUSE EFFECT



Part three details ways that you can help bring about the necessary changes.

human-produced "greenhouse gases," will face drastic temperature rises. Excessive use of these industrial and agricultural pollutants will transform much of our planetary home into a disaster area.

Scientists can't yet predict the exact timetable and, because the climate is so complex, may never be able to. But they concur that the fuse is already burning.

The hottest end of that fuse is our present addiction to fossil fuels. If the global appetite for burning coal, oil and natural gas con-

tinues at its current pace, the atmospheric CO₂ level—which had remained constant for thousands of years—will by the year 2050 be more than double what it was at the onset of the mid-19th century's "Industrial Revolution." Many experts say that unless fossil fuel use is curtailed by more than half around the world, the Earth will undergo temperature rises not experienced since the extinction of the dinosaurs. America is so dependent on fossil fuels that nearly 80 percent of the country's energy flows from their combustion.

Altering this course, as Jeremy Rifkin of the Global Greenhouse Network says, "will require an enormous shift in economic, military and political priorities—a shift so extraordinary in scope that it will require a worldwide mobilization effort on a scale never before experienced." Such a shift is not going to occur without massive public education and commitment. Or, as Rep. Claudine Schneider (R-RI) succinctly told Congress last fall, "We need to take personal respon-

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sibility for bringing about the change."

How do we begin to work our way out of this mess? Consider the following:

- The U.S. (23 percent) and the Soviet Union (21 percent) are responsible for nearly half of the CO₂ entering the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels. Last year the U.S. added 1.3 billion tons of carbon to the atmosphere. That was five tons per American.

- The amount of energy wasted annually in the U.S. costs Americans more than the current military budget of about \$10,000 per second, or more than \$300 billion a year, which is about twice the annual federal budget deficit.

- Generation of electricity by power stations produces one-third of the CO₂ emissions in the U.S. But as much energy escapes through American windows as flows through the Alaskan oil pipeline. Buildings use about one-third of the total energy consumed by industrial nations. The technology is now available to construct buildings or convert existing ones that would save enough energy in 50 years to avoid erecting 85 power plants and the equivalent of two Alaskan pipelines.

- About 80 percent of the potential of energy efficiency has yet to be utilized. Studies indicate that efficiency improvements alone could slice in half the projected contribution to global warming from fossil fuel burning by 2050.

- The Department of Energy (DOE) has calculated that 75 percent of the country's projected energy needs by the year 2010 could be economically extracted from such renewable sources as solar, wind, biomass, geothermal and hydropower.

- Transportation ranks a close second to electricity as a CO₂ producer. The average American automobile pumps its own weight in carbon into the atmosphere every year. That adds up to about 200 million tons a year. One out of every six barrels of oil in the world is consumed by passenger cars. The Reagan administration's 1986 lowering of fuel-efficiency standards for new vehicles from 27.5 to 26 miles per gallon has wasted as much oil per year as the federal government hopes to extract from beneath the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Increasing the typical car's fuel efficiency to 50 miles per gallon would cut in half the auto-generated CO₂ entering the atmosphere—and, coincidentally, lower the average American's yearly gas-pump bill by about \$200 at current prices.

- If all the nation's farmers switched to organic farming methods the soil would stop losing carbon. Instead, it would take so much carbon out of the air that it would roughly balance the total emissions from an efficient American car fleet.

- Thousands of acres of Central American rain forest have been cleared for cattle production, with 90 percent of the beef exported to the U.S., primarily for use in processed foods and pet food and by some fast-food chains. The loss of these forests pours tons of CO₂ into the air. And each cow raised on that land emits 200 to 400 quarts per day of methane, another of the major gases adding to the greenhouse effect. Until recently the restaurant chain McDonald's packaged its products in 1.7 billion cubic feet per year of non-biodegradable styrofoam, made from chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) whose production also adds to global warming and destroys the stratospheric ozone layer.

- Recovering and recycling the print run of a single edition of the Sunday New York Times would leave 75,000 trees standing and continuously reabsorbing, not releasing,

more carbon dioxide.

- A can of diet soda offers a single kilocalorie of food energy, yet it takes nearly 2,200 kilocalories of fossil fuel energy to replace instead of recycle the aluminum container.

These staggering statistics, drawn from a variety of sources, clearly point toward alternatives: more efficient use of existing forms of energy, wider use of renewable energy sources and more recycling, less gasoline, less feed-lot-raised beef and less tree-cutting. What makes sense in tackling the greenhouse effect also alleviates just about every other environmental ill, from acid rain to the garbage crisis. It also makes good pocket-book sense. Saving the planet for future generations is not only life-effective, but cost-effective.

Economy of efficiency: After mortgage or rent, Americans' largest household expense is fuel, which averages about \$1,100 a year. A 25 percent reduction in energy use, however, would save about \$25 billion annually. It would also make housing more affordable for some two million households, half of them low-income families. These were among the conclusions of a report issued last June by the Alliance to Save Energy, a coalition of business, government and con-

sumer organizations.

If every American cut in half her or his yearly home energy consumption, each would also keep 7,000 pounds of carbon out of the atmosphere, the Worldwatch Institute has calculated.

The notion of energy efficiency is not new. Long before the greenhouse effect triggered the alarm about the profligate use of energy, the Arab oil embargo and OPEC price hikes of the '70s brought energy efficiency into the American consciousness. At first the electric utility companies scoffed at the ideas of Amory Lovins, Arthur Rosenfeld and other "prophets" of efficiency. The gross national product, the skeptics said, was inextricably tied to growth in energy consumption. Yet in 1986, according to DOE statistics, the nation used only slightly more energy than it did in 1974—while the economy grew by 35 percent during that period.

Yet due partly to the drop in foreign oil prices over the past two years, energy use has been climbing, up by about 7 percent in the first half of 1988. Nonetheless, improvements in lighting fixtures, windows, insulation, cars and appliances over the past 15 years now save the U.S. about \$160 billion annually in energy costs. And the potential for far greater efficiency has only begun to

be tapped. For homeowners, some energy-saving steps are as simple as turning off lights and TV sets when they're not being used. Others involve an initial outlay of money, but soon pay for themselves. The following are ways to reduce your energy consumption:

Insulation. The total number of cracks and holes in the average house allows to escape about as much energy as a constantly open window, and many office buildings are even less efficient. But now-available "superinsulation" includes an airtight liner in the walls and can more than double a building's insulating capacity. Such airtight buildings can be both efficient and healthful if they are fitted with controlled ventilation that recovers most of the outgoing air. While it does add about 5 percent to the building costs, superinsulation pays for itself in five years in saved energy.

Windows: New "superwindows," which feature heat-reflective film applied to or suspended between window panes, can now insulate three to six times as well as double-glazed windows. Experts claim that windows already can insulate as well as most walls.

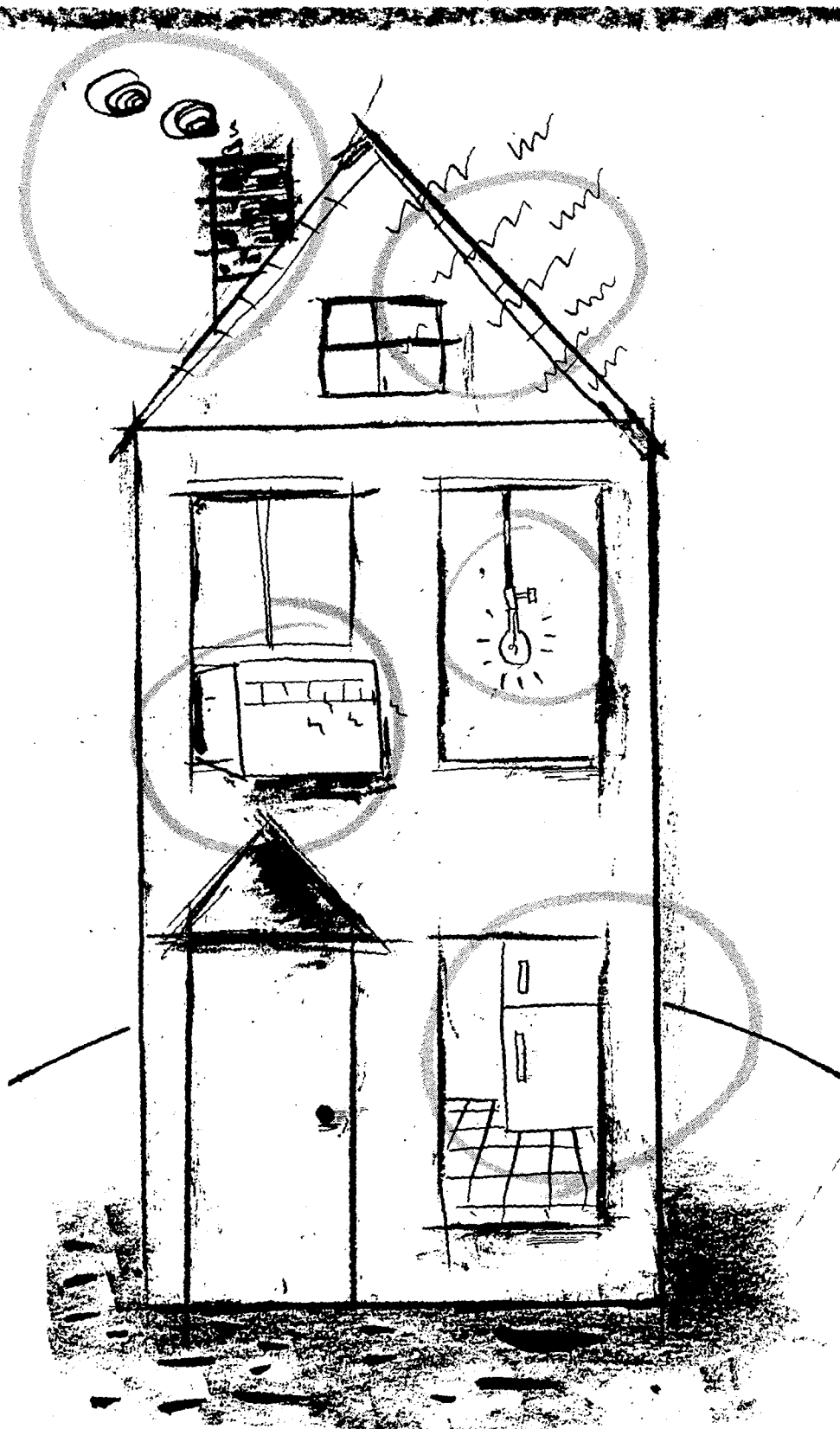
Lighting. Compact fluorescent 18-watt lightbulbs can now replace 75-watt incandescent ones and most other sizes. Although many hardware stores don't carry them because of their higher price, the fluorescents in the long run save substantially on electric bills. They last 10 times as long and, according to Lovins, one of these compact bulbs avoids the emission of a ton of CO₂ over its lifetime. New lighting technologies could cut projected carbon emissions by 93 million tons by the year 2010.

Appliances. If every refrigerator in the country were replaced with the best of the mass-produced models, it would be the equivalent of idling 20 coal-fired generating plants. The most efficient new furnaces and air conditioners also use half the energy of the majority of models in use—but even already installed units can be improved as much as one-third. And the Worldwatch Institute recommends a simple practice to relieve energy-guzzling by home air conditioners: plant mature shade trees on the south side of your house.

Home heating. According to the Environmental Action organization, some 18 percent of U.S. CO₂ emissions comes from home systems that burn fossil fuels for cooking, heating and hot water (rather than using electricity). Because an oil-fired system tends to put out more CO₂ than a gas-fired furnace, it must be thoroughly cleaned and tuned each year. This should include vacuuming the heat-exchanging surfaces, replacing the burner nozzle (which should be as small as possible), and a thorough efficiency test (CO₂ percent should be 11).

Push on utilities: Other nations, particularly Japan and West Germany, are much more energy efficient than the U.S. They use half as much energy to produce goods and services (per dollar of GNP), giving them an automatic cost advantage. "If this country were to become as energy-efficient as Japan," notes a recent study by two public interest groups, Public Citizen and the Safe Energy Communication Council, "it would save \$220 billion per year at a cost of only \$50 billion per year. The \$170 billion difference is about the size of the U.S. [annual] trade and budget deficits."

American electric utilities, prodded by environmental groups, are beginning to take heed. For some time utilities have offered information to their customers about money-saving efficiency investments. But only re-



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cently have power companies begun implementing their own "least-cost planning." In Hood River, Ore., the Natural Resources Defense Council teamed up with utility experts in 1981 to kick off a program in which the local electric company installed superinsulating equipment in nearly 3,000 homes. The movement peaked in 1984 when eight California investor-owned utilities spent almost \$400 million on energy conservation and load-management programs.

In New England, which lately has experienced the most rapid electrical-demand growth in the country, local utilities recently inaugurated the nation's most sophisticated efficiency program. Spurred by the Boston-based Conservation Law Foundation, companies have begun spending millions on efficiency improvements rather than for more power generation. A utility plan for Connecticut filed in 1988 will offer customers free installation of weatherstripping and lightbulbs of quadrupled efficiency, subsidies for insulation, and free energy audits for houses, apartments and factories. The goal is to cut in half the state's anticipated growth in electrical demand. A similar effort is underway in Massachusetts.

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) proposes that the federal government require utilities planning to expand capacity to reduce their total CO₂ emissions by the same amount that would be produced by adding the new capacity. Presently utilities are planning to build enough additional fossil fuel-powered plants to generate 25,000 megawatts of electricity between now and 1996. According to EDF economist Daniel Dudek, it would take at least 10 million acres of new American forests to absorb the additional CO₂, an area roughly twice the size of New Jersey. Thus far one of the most attractive ways to offset the CO₂ increase, says Dudek, would be to have utilities cooperate with the government under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by paying farmers to plant trees on more of their erodible cropland.

It's a novel idea. The CRP was established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1985, aiming to convert about 40 million to 45 million acres of farmland that are vulnerable to erosion into grassland, orchards or woodland. Farmers in essence "rent" the land to the government. The CRP's goal was to reforest at least five million acres by 1990. But there has been no great rush to plant trees, perhaps because the incentives are too low. So far only about one-quarter of the goal has been achieved. If the utilities, however, upped the ante to farmers and they doubled the newly forested land to 10 million acres, it would cost the utilities between \$1 billion and \$2 billion—adding only 5.5 percent to the capital investment of a new power plant, Dudek projects.

Need for renewables: Proposals like EDF's, along with energy efficiency, go hand in hand with the need for intensified development of non-fossil-fuel, renewable energy sources. William Chandler, a senior scientist at Pacific Northwest Labs, notes that an energy-efficient economy is much better suited to renewables. Buildings already designed for efficiency, for example, would require only small and affordable solar equipment rather than large and expensive installations.

Presently about 57 percent of the nation's electricity is generated from burning coal. Although it is the most readily available and cheapest fossil fuel, coal is also the dirtiest. It's the primary contributor to acid rain and the greenhouse effect. Coal-fired American utilities, according to the Electric Power Re-

"It's simply cheaper not to burn all of this fuel in the first place," says energy expert Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute. "It's really as if Americans were being offered a couple of hundred billion dollars a year to avoid the problem of global warming."

search Institute, account for 7.5 percent of the world's fossil fuel CO₂ output. Natural gas emits less carbon than coal or oil, and increasing its contribution is viewed by many experts as a bridge away from reliance on the more polluting fossil fuels. The World-watch Institute is advocating a tax on carbon whereby coal would be taxed more heavily per unit of energy than natural gas. It suggests that the weatherization of buildings be financed through such a tax.

Roughly 18 percent of the U.S.' electrical capacity now comes from nuclear power plants, and a renewed nuclear thrust is being touted by government and industry as a global warming "solution." Yet aside from safety, proliferation and waste problems, nuclear power's construction costs are exorbitant and the life span of nuclear plants short (see story on page 10).

So what about solar, wind and other renewables? Already, despite huge cutbacks under Ronald Reagan for research and development, renewable sources provide close to 10 percent of the country's electricity. Hydropower systems convert the kinetic energy of flowing water into electrical or mechanical energy. Solar collectors absorb relatively low-temperature heat, then transfer it to a gaseous or liquid medium. Photovoltaic cells are thin layers of semiconductor material, usually silicon, that convert sunlight directly into electricity without any mechanical equipment. Wind turbines use the kinetic energy in wind to rotate a shaft linked to a generator. None of these emits carbon dioxide, though hydroelectric dams can pose other adverse effects for local ecosystems.

Many people have already cut down on their electric costs—and kept CO₂ out of the air—by installing their own solar collectors to convert the sun's rays into immediately useful energy. Solar hot water and space heating systems can make an inefficient building at least 40 percent more efficient. Auxiliary solar designs can be incorporated as well: south-facing glass and attached solar greenhouses, awnings or vegetation that regulate sunlight during summer and winter months, thick floors and walls, and natural ventilation, heat circulation and lighting. A well-designed solar home can reduce annual energy bills by a minimum of 75 percent.

Until now solar and other alternative energy sources have not been considered as reliable as conventional ones. Yet in recent years several analysts have demonstrated that, even on a mass scale, renewable sources used in combination could in fact

be more reliable than fossil-produced electricity. Lovins summarized detailed technical studies in the November 1983 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*: "Stormy weather, bad for direct solar collection, is generally good for windmills and small hydropower plants; dry, sunny weather, bad for hydropower, is ideal for photovoltaics. A diversity of sources, each serving fewer and nearer users, would also greatly restrict the area blacked out if a grid connecting them failed. And when renewable energy sources do fail, they fail for shorter periods than do large power plants."

Recent technological advances could make such renewables not only an environmentally sound, but also an economical wave of the future. Take photovoltaic cells, for example, whose cost has fallen 90 percent in the past decade. Most of the solar cells on the market convert only 8 to 13 percent of the sun's rays into electricity. But last year Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M., achieved a goal long considered impossible. It built a photovoltaic cell capable of turning 31 percent of the light striking it into electric power. That is comparable to the 34 percent average efficiency of coal- and oil-fired power generators.

In California 16,000 wind-powered turbines now supply electricity to about 300,000 homes, resulting in 200,000 tons a year less in carbon emissions. New technology makes wind machines far more reliable and cost-effective. Where wind is abundant they can compete handily with fossil fuel power.

Another yet-to-be-harnessed power source is geothermal energy, or heat contained in the crust below the Earth's surface. A geothermal power plant would be designed to tap into this heat, bring it to the surface and release it to drive a turbine generator. The U.S. currently uses about 75 quads of energy annually; it's been estimated that 0.1 million quads of accessible geothermal resources lie primarily under the western third of the nation. But geothermal technology requires water for cooling and drilling, which is likely to become much scarcer in the West due to the greenhouse effect. And it would have to be carefully engineered to be environmentally sound, since salts, heavy metals and hydrogen sulfide would also be brought to the surface.

Someday hydrogen power may prove the ultimate renewable solution. While not an energy source itself, hydrogen can serve as a medium for other sources such as solar. It can be burned, much like natural gas, to provide industrial or space heat, or to generate steam to run electric turbines, and no CO₂ would be emitted.

The automobile: powered by what? Eventually hydrogen fuel might be used to power automobiles. Up to 45 percent more energy-efficient than gasoline, hydrogen can be derived from water through a process called electrolysis, which splits water into its basic components, hydrogen and oxygen. Since its combustion product is water vapor, hydrogen is essentially pollution-free.

But hydrogen's cost is exorbitant, and the Clean Energy Research Institute at the University of Miami figures that a full conversion to a hydrogen energy system would take 40 to 50 years. In the interim, what can be done about auto pollution? Besides being the biggest source of urban air toxics, motor vehicles add incredible amounts of CO₂, nitrous oxides and ozone (all greenhouse gases) to the atmosphere. At the end of World War II there were about 50 million cars, trucks and buses worldwide, while today close to 500 million vehicles clog the planet's streets. Americans

own 35 percent of these, burning about 100 billion gallons of gasoline annually—and contributing about 13 percent of the global CO₂ that's destroying the atmosphere.

Here again, greater fuel efficiency is not only critical but immediately feasible. The current efficiency of the nation's cars and trucks averages about 18 miles per gallon (mpg). On average, each vehicle produces more than 57 tons of CO₂ during its lifetime. A bill introduced in the last session of Congress by Rep. Schneider would mandate minimum auto efficiency standards of 45 mpg within the next 10 years. In Europe and Japan a dozen prototypes get 60 mpg in the city and 80 mpg on the highway. (A 60-mpg car would emit only 17 tons of CO₂ over its average lifetime.) The best, a Renault, averages 78 mpg in the city and 107 mpg on the highway.

Schneider's bill calls for tax rebates of up to \$2,000 per car as an incentive for customers to buy more efficient vehicles. It also would increase the current "gas-guzzler" tax on high-powered, inefficient ones. Another proposal, put forward last year by the World Resources Institute in congressional testimony, is a dollar-per-gallon "climate protection tax" on gasoline. Presently, the combined federal, state and local fuel taxes total around 22 cents a gallon in the U.S. Americans get off easy compared to Brazil, Japan and most European countries, where gasoline taxes are four to six times higher.

The millions of dollars generated by such a gasoline tax could be earmarked for improvement of mass transit systems and for accelerated development of fuel alternatives to gasoline. Two alcohol-based fuels, methanol and ethanol, both produce fewer regulated pollutants than gasoline. But would they help substantially in reducing the greenhouse effect? Methanol can be derived from coal, natural gas or biomass (energy derived primarily from wood and agricultural wastes). Ethanol can be derived from soy or corn residue. But this type of fuel generation isn't cost-competitive with gasoline. The entire corn crop of the U.S., for example, could supply only one-fourth of the nation's fuel needs. Worldwide, however, enough corn cobs and rice hulls are left over from crop production each year to produce 40 billion gallons of ethanol.

Electric vehicles, if their power is generated from renewable sources, may well be the best environmental bet for the future. The biggest obstacle to date for their large-scale distribution has been their lack of battery staying-power. Under current technology, standard lead-acid batteries in experimental vehicles have only a 60-mile range before they need recharging, which takes about eight hours. But a GM van, developed in conjunction with the Southern California Utility company, will go on the market next fall. Able to host a one-ton cargo or eight passengers, the van will have a top speed of 55 mph, and a two-hour daytime recharge can extend its range to 75 miles.

It could prove ideal for city driving. Though the current cost is about twice that of a conventional van, federal subsidies could help drive down the van's price. The DOE is preparing a van with a 100-mile range. And batteries are being developed that could more than double that range, while requiring less recharging time.

In November 1987 an innovator named Kenneth Kurtz displayed his sleek, three-wheel, open-cockpit electric car to some members of California's Senate Transportation Committee. Starting with a \$200 wrecked Volkswagen, Kurtz spent more than five years de-

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veloping the low, cone-shaped vehicle that he dubbed "Solar Wind." With a dashboard lined with solar cells, it can reach 70 mph speeds.

But until such new technologies become readily available, auto pollution remains a staggering problem. Some planners have gone so far as to suggest banning motor vehicles from areas of high population density, converting entirely to mass transit. Jobs, stores and residences would be more concentrated in revitalized city cores and along mass transit corridors.

Los Angeles, suffocating from the worst air pollution in the nation, has initiated strong measures along these lines. A 20-year air-quality plan expected to be adopted in March contains strategies on how and where future businesses and housing developments may locate, with industrial growth being zoned in proximity to affordable housing. By 1990 all companies with more than 100 employees must offer tangible rewards aimed at persuading workers to car-pool, bus or bike to work.

Trashing the atmosphere: Besides altering the ways and means of our transportation habits, we have to deal with our trash. Nationwide, in virtually every city and town, the remaining landfill volume capacity is dwindling, and careless past disposal has often severely polluted underground water and fouled the air. One "solution," huge municipal incinerators, is controversial because of its exorbitant costs and possible environmental liabilities. But the tremendous potential for recycling has scarcely begun to be tapped.

Consider what recycling means in terms of saved energy. An EPA study predicts that in the year 2000 the U.S. will landfill or incinerate 48.1 million tons of newsprint, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastic and aluminum. If those 48.1 million tons were recycled instead of tossed out, the National Appropriate Technology Assistance Service says, the nation would save the energy equivalent of 10.1 billion gallons of gasoline.

Producing a ton of aluminum from virgin bauxite ore takes the energy equivalent of 8.1 metric tons of coal, but producing the same amount of aluminum from recycled scrap takes 0.4 metric tons, a reduction of 95 percent. In 1985 the U.S., Japan and eight European countries recycled one-third of their aluminum. That alone was equivalent to the energy produced by five large power plants.

Each year the U.S. uses 67 million tons of paper, or about 580 pounds per person—but only 26 percent of it is recycled. Compared to producing a ton of paper from virgin wood pulp, recycled paper uses half the energy and half the water, results in 74 percent less air pollution and 35 percent less water pollution, saves 17 pulp trees and creates five times more jobs.

And consider what happens when the woody wastes from paper and lumber mills, as well as farms and urban construction sites, are hauled to landfills. There, as they decay, they give off large quantities of CO₂ and methane. This wood waste itself represents enough "feedstock" to fuel a staggering 200,000 megawatts of electricity per year, estimates the National Wood Energy Association.

Saving the trees: The Earth's trees, shrubs and soils contain about two trillion tons of carbon, approximately triple the amount stored in the atmosphere. But when vegetation is cleared and burned, or simply left to decay, its carbon is released to join

the atmospheric pool of carbon dioxide. Even more carbon in the soil below enters the atmosphere.

So tree-planting and reforestation are other ways to help offset global warming. Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley launched his campaign for a fifth term last month by announcing a city tree program. Working with a local environmental group called Tree People, the city intends to plant between two million and five million trees over the next five years—in parking lots, along streets and in other unshaded areas. Bradley said that although the L.A. tree program would have only a small effect on the warming trend, he hoped that major cities around the world might begin similar projects. The

American Forestry Association recently set a goal of helping Americans plant 100 million trees in American cities and suburbs by 1992.

The most vital tree-related projects, of course, revolve around preserving what's left of the tropical rain forests. From 1940 to 1980, and particularly over the past 15 years, more than 40 percent of these invaluable lands have given way to dams, timbering, roads, farming and ranching. Now disappearing at about 100 acres a minute, rain forests will be wiped off the planet by the year 2050 if that pace continues unabated.

The worst destruction has occurred in Brazil, where in 1987 human-made fires in the Rondonia region pumped 518 million tons of carbon into the air. But it appears

that Brazil may be changing its course. Last October 12 Brazilian President José Sarney, saying "we must contain the predatory actions of man," announced a series of steps aimed at slowing the deforestation. Much of the forest has been razed for cattle production, which will now be strictly limited in the Amazon region. Tax breaks were suspended for this and other development projects that harm the environment.

An International Tropical Timber Organization was also formed in 1988 to bring together nations that produce and consume tropical hardwoods. Last July it embarked on an experimental project in the Amazon to develop ways inhabitants can cut fewer trees while collecting more rubber, nuts, spices and useful plants. Japan, the largest importer of tropical timber, pledged \$2 million to kick off the program. But some rain forest-watchers fear that this is akin to the fox guarding the henhouse. Two-thirds of Japan is covered with trees, but they remain sacrosanct under the nation's Shinto religious tradition. Meanwhile, wood is the most popular construction material in Japan—and half of all the tropical timber that's traded internationally ends up there. An estimated 1 billion trees are devoured by Japanese industry each year.

While Japan's contradictory role in the forest drama has yet to be addressed, the U.S. Congress is looking at other ways to stem the global deforestation. Rep. Schneider's Global Warming Prevention Act would ban imports of wood and its products from countries failing to halt their deforestation, and would also promote debt reduction for developing countries that implement conservation measures.

Several environmental groups—Conservation International, the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund—have initiated their own "debt-for-nature" swaps. In Bolivia, Costa Rica and Ecuador, the organizations have negotiated to buy portions of these nations' foreign debt in exchange for commitments to preserve the local environment. Under the largest such arrangement, reached in mid-January, Costa Rica will not have to pay off a \$5.6 million debt owed to the American Express Bank; instead, the country will issue \$1.7 million in currency bonds to finance a tropical forest preservation project. Another novel approach was recently adopted by the Virginia-based Applied Energy Services company, which will offset future carbon emissions from a new coal-fired co-generation plant to be built in Connecticut by funding a 52-million-acre reforestation project in Guatemala.

Besides the need to stop tropical deforestation, "expanding tree cover to satisfy demands for fuel and industrial wood and to protect soil and water resources could reduce net carbon releases from tropical lands by 47 percent," says the Worldwatch Institute. The growing loss of forests not only adds to global warming, but also has left a severe energy shortage in the Third World. In rural parts of the Himalayas and sub-Saharan Africa, women and children spend anywhere from 100 to 300 days a year gathering fuel wood to cook meals and heat their homes. "Unless tree planting is accelerated," adds Worldwatch, "half the people in the developing world will lack a sustainable supply of fuel wood in the year 2000." Each year in developing countries about 15 million acres of cropland turn to desert.

There is a solution to the Third World's energy crisis—agroforestry. Nitrogen-fixing trees are planted as windbreaks or interspersed with crops to enhance soil fertil-

Nukes won't cool the greenhouse

When the greenhouse effect became headline news during last summer's heat-wave and drought, the nuclear industry wasted no time in hopping on the bandwagon. Spokespeople began proclaiming that nuclear energy is the best hope for curtailing global warming. Says Scott Peters of the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness (the industry's public-relations arm), "We need all the electricity we can get in the next 15 years or so.... We should substitute nuclear plants for some coal and oil because nuclear does not add CO₂ or other greenhouse gas buildup."

Some in Congress apparently agree with this assessment. Two Senate bills introduced last year to combat the greenhouse effect would provide major federal support for developing new nuclear reactors that some scientists and politicians claim are "inherently safe." Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-CO), sponsor of one bill, has said that we have to find a cure for our "nuclear measles."

Westinghouse is already working on new reactors with more backup safety systems and a "user-friendly" standardized design that the company says is more economical. The nuclear engineering department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology is blueprinting a much smaller nuclear plant that it claims is meltdown-proof and able to be mass-produced in a factory.

But is nuclear energy the solution? There are 108 operable commercial reactors in this country. No new plants have been ordered for a decade, and none scheduled after 1973 has been built. As John Ahearne, a former member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, recently told the *New York Times*: "Let's remember why nuclear power died before we suddenly say let's restart it. Costs were rising rapidly, a number of plants were seen to be operated very poorly, and electricity demand wasn't there. How does the greenhouse effect change that?"

Indeed, Dr. John Gofman, professor emeritus of biophysics and medical physics at the University of California at Berkeley and former associate director of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, recently wrote that nuclear power actually "adds heat to the Earth's surface by liberating energy that otherwise remains in unfissioned uranium and plutonium nuclei."

"It's even possible that nuclear power will make a net addition to the greenhouse effect from carbon dioxide," Gofman added, "to the extent that large quantities of fossil fuels are burned in order to mine and refine the necessary

uranium, to construct the nuclear power plants, to clean up their multibillion-dollar messes, and later to decommission them and put their deadly wastes somewhere. Given the poor performance of our nuclear plants so far, it is an open question whether they will end up producing any more net energy here than the fossil fuels consumed by them."

And the cost of substituting nuclear power altogether for coal-fired plants around the world would be astronomical. A new study by the Rocky Mountain Institute, a Colorado-based energy think tank, maintains that nuclear plants would have "to be built at the average rate of one new plant (1000 megawatts) every one to three days for nearly 40 years, with electricity generation costs averaging between \$525 billion and \$787 billion each year." Many countries, the study continues, would have to be almost blanketed by them, with the total cost running as high as \$9 trillion. Even if creation of a new generation of "inherently safe" reactors proceeded rapidly, it would be the turn of the century before any could be installed.

None of this, the report adds, would prevent an increase in CO₂ emissions. Indeed, any money spent on expanding nuclear power would displace only one-seventh as much CO₂ as the same amount spent on energy efficiency. In that sense, more reliance on nuclear power would make global warming even worse.

Charles Komanoff, a New York-based energy analyst, has come up with similar figures. For nuclear power to reduce fossil fuel use by one-half by the year 2020, assuming a 3 percent annual economic growth with no improvement in energy efficiency, the world would have to finish two reactors a day, or 14 a week, for the next 30 years, according to Komanoff.

Yet three decades after nuclear power came on line, no proven safe storage site has yet been found for reactor-produced waste. Another report, released last fall by the Safe Energy Communication Council and Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, notes that if the U.S. moved to supplant fossil fuel-based electricity with nuclear, "construction of at least five more high-level nuclear waste dumps in addition to the one currently under review by the Department of Energy would be needed."

Irving Mintzer of the World Resources Institute environmental research group says a massive switch to nuclear power "would bring with it environmental risks every bit as large, complex and challenging...as a rapid climate change." —D.R.

ity, retain soil moisture and reduce erosion. Crop yields increase as trees provide fuel wood and other useful products.

Some of the most successful reforestation projects have been initiated by relief organizations like CARE and Oxfam, and have been reinforced by local groups. In Kenya the "Greenbelt Movement," sponsored by the National Council of Women, has involved more than 15,000 farmers and half a million school children in establishing 670 community nurseries and planting more than two million trees.

The Worldwatch Institute estimates that satisfying Third World needs for fuel and wood products and stabilizing soil and water resources will require planting trees on some 320 million acres—an area nearly twice the size of Texas—over the next decade. Doing this, and cutting deforestation rates, "could together reduce current carbon emissions from all human activities by about a fifth."

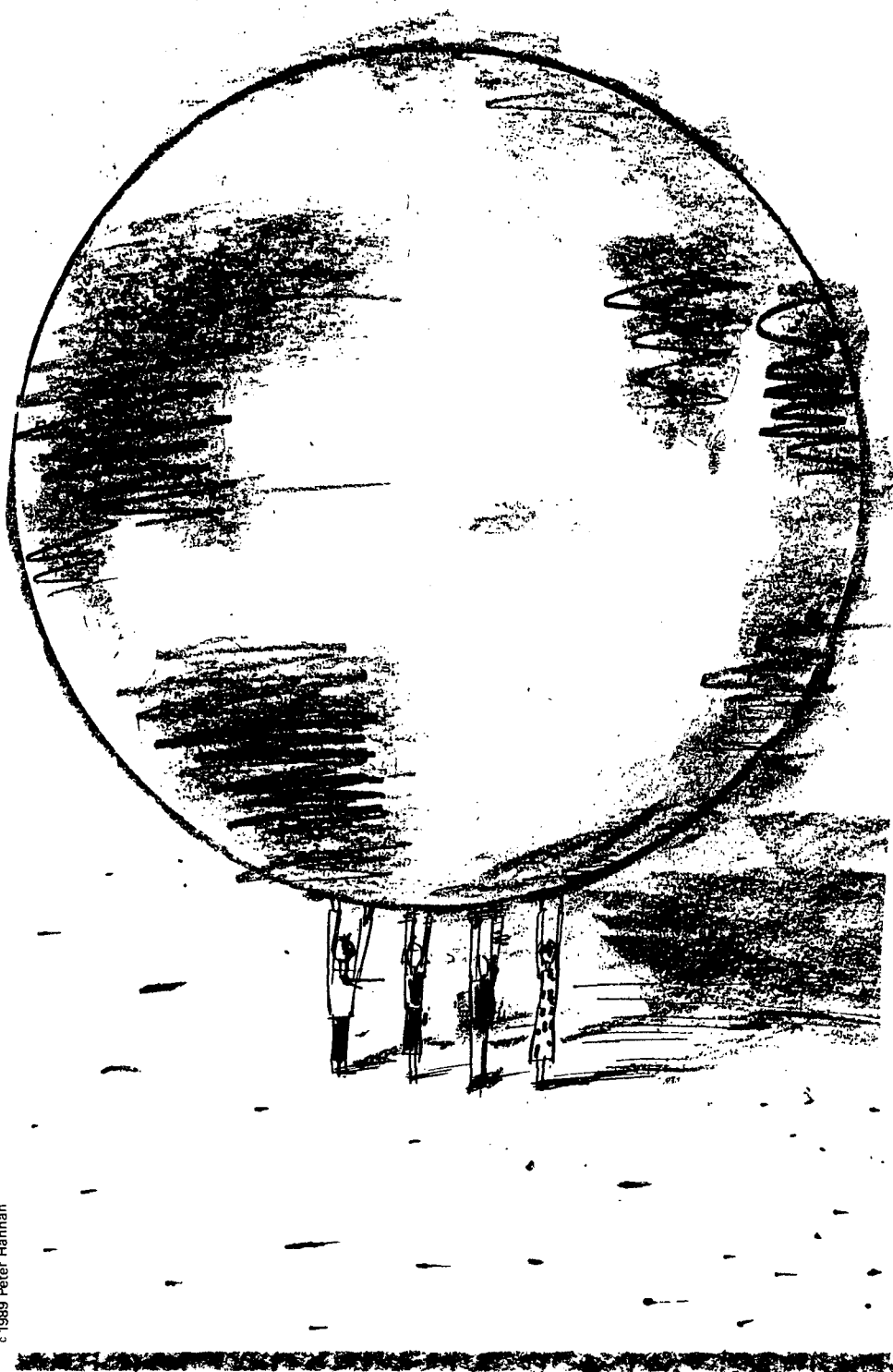
Yet from 1980 to 1984 major development banks allocated less than 1 percent of their annual financing to forestry, and the U.N. Development Program only 2 percent. And reforestation is still occurring at a snail's pace—just a few percent in Africa, 10 percent in Latin America and about 25 percent throughout Asia.

One world or none? Americans must not only implement our own reforestation, efficiency and alternative energy programs, but must also export our knowledge and expertise to the rest of the world.

"Probably the single most important thing we can do to head off the greenhouse effect is to help introduce efficient use of electricity in the Soviet Union, China and India," says Lovins. "In the USSR, for example, they burn large amounts of low-grade coal fairly inefficiently in the eastern part of the country, lose 30 to 40 percent of the power in the grid because of the enormous distances and then use it very inefficiently in the western part of the country. So each unit of electricity they can save has enormous leverage in the amount of carbon going into the air."

"This is even more true in China," Lovins continues, "which currently plans to burn more coal in the year 2030 than the whole world will burn this year. China recently decided it was time for people to have refrigerators, so they built 100-some refrigerator factories. The fraction of households owning refrigerators in Beijing went from 2 percent to more than 60 percent in five years. But by choosing an inefficient design, they inadvertently committed themselves to many billions of dollars' worth of power plants they can't afford. Now that this has been pointed out to them, I don't think they will make the same mistake again. The truth is, the developing nations have the opportunity to leapfrog over our mistakes by building resource efficiency into their infrastructure the first time around."

Over the past year Lovins' Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) has begun its own "citizen technodiplomacy" program with the Soviet Union. Lovins has traveled to the USSR four times in recent months, helping officials in Moscow and Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia, plan a major energy-efficiency program. A 40-minute documentary film titled *The Energy Efficiency Revolution: A Key to Perestroika* was broadcast nationwide on Soviet television four times last year. Then in November eight Soviet scholars visited the Colorado-based institute, bringing drafts for a book on energy efficiency and its relationship to security. Soviet and American architects brought together by RMI are also



If every American cut in half her or his yearly home energy consumption, each would also keep approximately 7,000 pounds of carbon out of the atmosphere, according to calculations by the Worldwatch Institute.

collaborating on designing a series of international youth camps, all dependent on renewable energy, for an exchange program.

Elsewhere around the globe, half of the developing countries currently rely on imported oil for more than 75 percent of their commercial energy needs. Yet sunshine, wind, water and biomass are all available locally. Such projects can be small in scale, with zero or minimal fuel costs, and are able to be assembled by local labor—particularly

if the U.S. is willing to share the technological know-how. On the Hawaiian island of Kauai, for example, 58 percent of all the electricity generated in 1985 came from the burning of sugarcane residues.

In some cases, other nations are already setting the pace on energy conservation and alternatives. Denmark is the world's major supplier of wind turbines. The governments of Italy and India recently made large commitments to solar-cell technology. India, half of whose 600,000 villages have no electricity at all, is home to a large photovoltaics research community and is encouraging foreign companies to participate in joint ventures. Japan recycles close to 50 percent of its garbage. To conserve auto fuel, the United Kingdom is looking at a system of billing car owners monthly for their road use, using computers to denote rush-hour versus night-time travel.

But all these efforts could prove futile unless something is done to slow the growth rate of the world's population, and figure out new crop production methods to sustain the food supply in a world destined for more periods of drought. The U.S. should assist international agencies like the U.N. and the International Planned Parenthood Federation in seeking to stabilize a soaring birth-

rate. (Otherwise, the Earth's population is expected to double to more than 10 billion people over the next 40 years.) And new agricultural methods being developed in this country could be exported intensively.

For example, the Rodale Research Center in Pennsylvania is breeding new commercial traits into amaranth, a drought-tolerant grain first cultivated by the Aztecs. Kansas' Land Institute is experimenting with perennial crops that will require far less moisture to produce seeds than traditional "annuals" like wheat and corn—and no chemicals or cultivation. Plant physiologists at the University of Delaware are uncovering biochemical pathways that fail in plant cells during times of stress. They hope to discover proteins produced by the genes that can be inserted into crop plants to help provide protection from drought and heat. Irrigation engineers in Texas and California are teaching farmers how to water crops more efficiently and conserve most of the water that was previously wasted.

Private organizations, along with several states, have begun taking steps to combat the greenhouse effect. While the federal government lags way behind, at least 10 states now have policies requiring utilities to implement "least-cost planning" toward more efficient electrical use; 15 states offer alternative energy tax credits; and 16 states fund ride-sharing programs. Four New England states—Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island—have banned or restricted styrofoam products that contain CFCs.

Time for action: It is abundantly clear that we can do something about the greenhouse effect. More efficient use of electrical power and automobile fuel are the obvious first steps. There may be scientific uncertainty about whether global warming is already upon us, but even if there were no greenhouse effect, greater efficiency would save consumers money, make the nation more competitive and improve our energy security.

"It's simply cheaper not to burn all this fuel in the first place," Amory Lovins summarizes. "It's really as if Americans were being offered a couple hundred billion dollars a year to avoid global warming."

Foreign aid to help other nations take a similar course is not only in the best interests of the Earth's future, but also is America's responsibility as a world leader. On the global stage, the U.S. should push for an immediate phaseout of all CFCs, not simply a 50 percent cutback by 1999, among the industrialized nations, and we must provide incentives to drastically curtail the destruction of tropical rain forests. Around the world, too, a shift away from petrochemical and feed-lot agriculture is equally critical.

But let there be no mistaking the immensity of the task ahead. For what is required amounts to a revolutionary change in the way our society has become accustomed to running. We must face squarely the fact that our civilization has wreaked havoc on the elements that sustain life—the water, the air, the Earth and its creatures. For much too long we have largely acquiesced to the industrialization of our food and energy processes that has brought about this situation.

Now the greenhouse effect looms like a descending curtain over all of us. We can choose to aggressively honor the natural cycles of life, or we can continue to ignore them. The second course, however, assures a future upheaval that will be unprecedented in human history. □

Dick Russell writes regularly on environmental issues for *In These Times*.

COLOMBIA

Diary of a dirty war

By Merrill Collett

DURING MY EIGHT TRIPS TO COLOMBIA AS A journalist, I've taken 26 steno pads of handwritten notes, taped dozens of interviews, bought enough books to fill a shelf, clipped enough newspapers to fill a file cabinet and accumulated far too many memories of murdered sources.

Hundreds of political activists have been shot down in Colombia since my first visit there in 1985. The scale of the slaughter is expanding. At one time only leftist leaders died. Now whole villages suspected of leftist sympathies are massacred.

As the volume of victims increases, world concern withers. Like starving Ethiopians, murdered Colombians are no longer news. Editors tell me with a shrug that "Colombia is a violent country."

It certainly is. There are so many street murders, so many shootouts between rival criminal gangs, so many lethal explosions of family rage that Colombia has a homicide rate greater than any other country not at war. But these and the other grim statistics—137 death squads, 376 private security companies, 15,000 murders a year—shroud the real issue.

The real issue is politics. Colombia's violence, even its endemic street crime, has political roots. When the rich elites started battling each other for the presidency more than a century ago, they drew the whole country into their blood feuds.

In one great spasm, a decade of intraparty death known as *La Violencia*, 200,000 people died in sectarian warfare touched off by the assassination of Liberal leader Jorge Gaitan in 1948.

Colombia's violent political convulsions have not crumbled the *ancien régime*. The leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties belong to two feuding factions, but they share allegiance to one oligarchy. Power does not pass between classes; it passes between generations. Colombia is a country ruled by the sons of presidents and the sons of the sons of presidents.

To his credit, the current president wants to pry open Colombia's tightly controlled two-party monopoly. Although Virgilio Barco comes from a wealthy Liberal family, he has put an end to the clubby old-boy agreement under which Liberals and Conservatives divided up government appointments.

But while Barco espouses political reform, gunmen shoot down the reformers. A prim, almost priggish, man, the president averts

his eyes from this embarrassing stain on Colombia's image.

Like Barco, I have been reluctant to look closely at the crimes of Colombia. During my three years of visits, I've learned to love Colombia. It's hard to cast blame at a country that has become a part of me. But as I page through my notes and sort out my files, I can't ignore the heinous trail. From day to day, the murderers move on. This is a diary of their dirty war.

1985

So many candles.

Colombia has many religious holidays, and today is one of them—December 8, the Day of the Immaculate Conception. In Bogotá's St. Francis Church, under a splendid wood-paneled ceiling, a priest praises the motherly virtues of the Virgin Mary. The pews are packed with the faithful. In their fervor they have lighted so many candles that heat pours out of the doorway of the church and into the chill of the night.

Outside I notice a young woman dressed in rags. She is sitting in the shadows, but when I move closer I can see that her eyes are slanted and closely set and that her skull is broad and short—the obvious signs of Down's syndrome. She is carrying a baby and begging. I empty my pockets into her outstretched hand.

Human brains, crushed bones.

Colombians celebrate the Day of the Immaculate Conception by lighting candles and setting off firecrackers, but this year the noisy tradition has been upstaged by the big explosion that took place a month before.

On November 6 a commando unit of the M-19 guerrillas entered the basement of Bogotá's Palace of Justice, headquarters of the country's judicial system. In a communiqué issued to the press the guerrillas said they were protesting military violations of the peace accord worked out with President Belisario Betancur.

As the guerrillas held him hostage, the chief justice of the Supreme Court called Betancur on the telephone and begged the president to negotiate. He refused. Then the army took over.

Using tanks, helicopters, rocket launchers and dynamite, soldiers stormed the Palace of Justice in a fierce assault that one wire service called "some of the heaviest fighting ever seen in peacetime in Latin America."

While the guns blazed, a radio reporter

got a call through to guerrilla leader Luis Otero inside. Reporter: "Will you respect the lives of the judges?" Otero: "We will, but the army won't. The army is ready to do away with everybody."

When the smoke cleared, the charred remains of 100 bodies were removed. Then the press went in. A Reuters correspondent filed this report: "Human brains, crushed bones and the eerie blood-etched outline of a dead female guerrilla's face on paving stones—this was the scene inside Bogotá's Palace of Justice."

In the National Cathedral, just a few steps away from what remained of the Palace of Justice, the government held a state funeral for 11 judges. Betancur and the army brass attended, but the surviving Supreme Court justices boycotted the services to protest Betancur's refusal to negotiate for the release of their colleagues, now dead.

Carcass of justice.

I am staying in a clean but spartan hotel with a cold-water shower at the end of the hall. The proprietor is a sad-faced Spaniard named Manuel Calvo. "This country is such a shame," he says. "It has so many possibilities, and yet..."

It's a short walk from the hotel to the main city square, the Plaza Bolívar. In the center of the plaza a statue of Simon Bolívar, who helped liberate this land from Spanish rule in the 19th century, faces the carcass of the Palace of Justice. Over its entrance, through which a tank has just recently passed, this inscription is cut into the bullet-scarred wall: "Colombians—arms have given us independence. Laws will give us liberty."

Turning point.

The gate is open to the mansion owned by Alfredo Vazquez Carrizosa, a former foreign minister and one of Colombia's senior statesmen. A maid shows me to the study. Vazquez enters. He wears a well-tailored suit that sharpens his tall, thin body into a blade. His tie is tightly knotted. Like Betancur, Vazquez belongs to the Conservative Party, but Vazquez is not happy with the president's recent performance. "The Palace of Justice was the turning point," Vazquez says. "The initiative has passed to the military."

Christmas cleanup.

The M-19 has gone into hiding in Bogotá, so I seek them out in Cali, 200 miles to the southwest. With its gentle weather and lively nightlife, Cali offers a welcome change from cold, formal Bogotá.

I take a room in the Hotel New York, a favorite stopping place for out-of-town business officials. From one side of the hotel's rooftop terrace I see squatter settlements pressing in on the city like encampments of soldiers in a class war. From the other side of the terrace I look down on Sixth Avenue, a belt of fashionable boutiques that invites the affluent to park their Mercedes automobiles and browse among the French imports.

Exploiting these contradictions, M-19 has sent its cadre to organize Siloe and Aguablanca, the two largest squatter settlements. A few days before I arrived, 3,000 soldiers stormed Siloe to rout out a dozen or so guerrillas in what the army called "a Christmas cleanup." Three days of house-to-house fighting left at least 17 people dead and 40 wounded, most of them civilians. "They wanted to clean up Cali with a dirty war," a survivor told reporters.

I am skeptical. Several extrajudicial killings don't always add up to a coordinated plot. Colombia is not Argentina. Colombia is the grand dame of Latin American democracies. It has a century-old constitution that the army respects. There have been only a half-dozen years of military rule in 176 years of independence. Dirty war here?

Undesirables.

A human rights lawyer joins me for breakfast on the hotel terrace in Cali. Right-wing paramilitary groups with names like Relentless Justice and Black Flag are murdering students, trade union leaders and even progressive members of the Liberal and Conservative parties, she says. Lately the killers have started shooting "social undesirables"—gay men and prostitutes. She says the death squads are linked to army officers and to the F-2, the police intelligence unit.

No news.

Lionel Lopez, a student at Cali's Valley University, was abducted by five carloads of men on Jan. 9, 1982, according to witnesses. For nearly four years his mother and father search for Lopez. They demonstrate in the Plaza Bolívar in Bogotá. They badger the police. A month before I arrive in Cali Lionel Lopez's mother receives a telephone call. Her husband is dead. His tortured body has been found in Palmira, a nearby town.

There is no news of her son Lionel. "Human life has lost its value in Colombia," she tells me. "And human rights are more reviled every day."

Civic action.

Cali is the home of some of Colombia's wealthiest citizens. The Aguablanca section of Cali is home to 300,000 poor people. They light their zinc-roofed shacks with stolen electricity, drink water from dirty wells and tell each other that this urban hell is better than the rural hell they left behind.

The rutted dirt road into Aguablanca bounces our Volkswagen like a rubber ball.

My companions are two young sympathizers of the M-19 and the middle-class mother of a former seminary student who quit his studies to join the armed struggle.

She says she hopes her son will return to the seminary "after."

We pull into a cul-de-sac and an M-19 commander comes out to greet us. He is accompanied by a young Aguablanca recruit and the former seminary student. The commander pats my shoulder with his right hand. His left hand is missing, blown off, he says, in a grenade battle with police. A pistol is tucked into his waistband. The others also carry guns.

They tell me they are organizing the community through civic action programs—laying water lines, for example. The guerrilla strategy is to hold territory and "build an army." The ease with which they move about suggests they enjoy considerable community support.

In Aguablanca I fall in love with a three-year-old girl named Carolina. As the TV plays a rumba, we dance in a cardboard-and-bamboo house whose walls are covered with magazine photos of movie stars.

1986

What you want

It's May, and the presidential elections are on Sunday. One of the dozens of campaign banners strung across Bogotá's streets carries a message considered radical only in Colombia's version of democracy. "Movement of the Independent Fringe," proclaims the banner, "Vote for whomever you want!"

Such appeals pose no serious challenge to the candidates of the Liberal and Conservative parties. They are Alvaro Gomez, the son of a president who violently repressed his opponents, and Virgilio Barco, the son of a family that got rich on a land grant from a dictator. Barco is certain to win, not because he is well-liked (the military would prefer Gomez) but because he is a Liberal. The country feels cheated by the Conservative government of Betancur, who promised to bring peace but didn't.

Remember the figure

Betancur's peace efforts were not entirely in vain. The M-19 has returned to the underground, but the oldest and largest group of guerrillas, the Soviet-line FARC, has come

out of the hills to compete in electoral politics. Two FARC leaders now sit in Congress. I talk with one of them.

Braulio Herrera is big and bearded. He wears heavy glasses, a bulletproof vest and a large wrist watch that he continually consults as if counting the time he has left to live.

Assassins are killing the members of the Patriotic Union, a party founded by the FARC and the Communists but filled with progressives of many persuasions. The guerrillas will not continue to endure the slaughter with "Asiatic patience," Herrera warns.

Colombia's attorney general says the Patriotic Union is under fire from death squads linked to the army. The charge arouses a storm of comment in the press, but neither the Liberal nor the Conservative presidential candidate has a thing to say. President Betancur also keeps mum. ("Always so eloquent, President Betancur opts for monastic silence in military matters," observes Alfredo Vazquez Carrizosa in his newspaper column.)

The military bitterly denounces the attorney general. A former army commander accuses him of "hanging gravestones" around the necks of soldiers and of waging "a dirty war" against the armed forces.

No challenge

BOGOTÁ, Aug. 5, 1986—Killings by right-wing extremists pose one of the biggest challenges for Virgilio Barco Vargas, who takes over the presidency Aug. 7.

—Christian Science Monitor

BOGOTÁ, Dec. 14, 1986—Congressman Octavio Vargas Acosta, of the new leftist party, the Patriotic Union (UP), was assassinated today, raising to 14 the number of legislators, councilmen and political leaders of the group that have been assassinated in the last five months.

—The Associated Press

1987

No suspects

Warm air rises to meet the plane as I land in the center of Colombia's banana-growing coast, just south of Panama. Banana plantations dominate this region, but another major industry is death. There have been



Change of heart

There has been a startling development. A paid assassin has had a change of heart. For several days this summer he and other members of a hit team shadowed a Patriotic Union mayor with the intent to kill, but during this time the assassin watched his victim long enough to realize that he was a good man who deserved to live. "There are people who take the bread out of their mouths to give it to others—he was like that."

The assassin, his name is Ortega, backs out, but the others go ahead and kill the mayor anyway. Ortega then goes to the authorities and denounces as mastermind of the crime an officer in the army's intelligence service, Capt. Luis Ardila.

Ortega's testimony, which is published in the press, is detailed and convincing. He says Ardila instructed the hit team to "do things right and make sure no one realized it was the army." Ardila denies all. The charge "offends my moral integrity and my military honor," he writes in a letter to *El Tiempo* newspaper. The captain keeps his job. Ortega leaves the country.

What the people say

"Our constitution orders all authorities of the republic to protect human rights, starting with the right to life."

—President Virgilio Barco, speech to Congress, July 20, 1987

"Here nothing happens."

—Colombian popular saying

Sweat and roses

The peppery taste of tear gas hangs in the October air as I elbow into Bogotá's National Cathedral. Riot police and rock-throwing demonstrators trade blows near the steps of the cathedral while inside thousands of mourners shuffle toward a flag-draped casket. It holds the body of Jaime Pardo Leal, a former university lecturer and judge and the leader of the Patriotic Union. As the party's presidential candidate, Pardo earned the enmity of the military, the grudging respect of the oligarchy and the affection of the popular classes. His murder two days ago set off rioting in the capital and across the country.

So far 11 people have died, including a 13-year-old boy killed when soldiers

Continued on page 22



EDITORIAL



On global warming, the Bush team talks out of both sides of its mouth

Last week, in his first diplomatic meeting since being confirmed, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3rd told a 17-nation working group and representatives of 23 other nations that the time is ripe to take steps against the greenhouse effect caused by global air pollution. Almost committing himself to action, Baker said that "we can probably not afford to wait until all of the uncertainties have been resolved before we act." Scientists must still "refine the state of our knowledge," he said, but "time will not make the problem go away."

Baker reportedly chose this gathering to signal that the new administration puts a high priority on addressing the problem of global warming and climate change. It was also an opportunity—one of several seized upon by officials since President Bush's inauguration—to distinguish the new president from the old one. While scientists are gathering more information about global warming, Baker said, international policy makers, even in the absence of climatic changes, should "focus immediately on prudent steps that are already justified."

They should include steeper cuts in the production of chlorofluorocarbons, which may contribute to global warming and are the major suspect in the depletion of the ozone layer that protects the Earth from excess levels of solar ultraviolet radiation. In addition, he said, fossil fuel use should be reduced through greater efficiency in the use of energy and more trees should be planted to absorb excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The words were welcome, but actions speak louder than words. In a meeting of the working group following Baker's speech, administration officials proposed a plan that echoed the Reagan approach to this and other environmental issues—more research and delayed action. Members of the working group from other countries criticized the American proposals, saying they contradicted Baker's words and would delay meaningful action for too long.

Observers tried to put the best light on the contradiction between Baker's remarks and his subordinates' suggestions. In an apparent desire to provide a graceful way out of this discrepancy, they speculated that the mid-level officials who formulated the American plan were holdovers from the Reagan administration who had not yet assimilated the new administration's views. A representative of the Environmental Defense Fund, who attended the meeting as an observer, put it this way: "Secretary Baker's statement was very important and seemed completely consistent with what George Bush said during his campaign. But the work plan presented by the bureaucracy sounded like it was proposed by a completely different government."

A State Department spokesman insisted that the American proposals would be considered by a seven-nation panel of the working group along with other nations' alternatives. "We would not characterize the comments of other nations on the U.S. approach as criticism," he said. Nor would he comment on the apparent inconsistencies of the administration position.

So we are left not knowing whether the Bush administration is breaking with the Reagan tradition of talking environmental protection but finding ways to do nothing, or whether foot-dragging holdovers sabotaged the new guys. This, of course, is no small matter. As reporter Dick Russell has pointed out in his three-part series on the greenhouse effect (see page 7), once global warming reaches the stage where it is obvious to all, it will be too late to protect against it.

It's not as if there were any question about what needs to be done. Baker's comments, vague and general as they were, indicated a consensus on that. Nor does any serious scientist question that action must be taken before things go too far. As the Swedish chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said at the working group meeting, policy makers do need more "details" from scientists about the greenhouse effect, but added that "we should not fool ourselves that we need all the details before decisions are necessary."

Bush said that he wanted to be the environmental president. What he instructs his secretary of state to do and how he follows through on this crucial issue will be the test of his sincerity.

It's a kinda gentler administration

With all the transition-time brouhaha about the dearth of women and minorities among Bush appointees, another human deficit has gone virtually unnoticed: we're now faced with a decline in the number of Cabinet-level Jews. Despite all the scripted blather about a kinder, gentler nation, the result so far can at best be described as a kind of *gentler* administration. While Reagan's Hollywood connections created openings for Jewish advisers, Bush's Waspy, polo-pony, yacht-club milieu is hardly a traditional Semitic stomping ground. Of course, it's not just Jews, but also women and minorities who are receiving scant or token representation in the new government. The elite, members-only cast of Bush appointees serves further to blister the president's already peeling veneer of folksiness, which at any rate had been only an illusion conjured by opportunistic, if media-savvy, hirelings. A moment of nostalgia for Ronald Reagan is a strange and terrifying thing, but it seems that Reagan's boyish charm has given way to something less charming and decidedly more goyish.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

Be happy, do nothing

DICK RUSSELL'S FIRST INSTALLMENT OF "THE END-less Simmer" (ITT, Jan. 11) is so entertaining that I hate to cavil, but like Jerry Garcia said, it seldom turns out the way it does in the song. The real community of experts does not accept even the "fact" of a rising global temperature.

Consider this: 97.5 percent of U.S. weather stations are in metropolitan areas where urban heat production is rising. (Note that this is different from the solar absorption effects of buildings and pavement that Russell cited.) Russell thinks that because city "heat islands" don't affect the world's weather—which is true—then he, and we, can dismiss the "few scientists [who] even continue to argue that there isn't enough evidence for alarm." Those cranks are just some damn climatologists, who are no match for NASA chiefs and Worldwatch doomcriers when it comes to catching the media's ear.

The climatologists can only repeat that the other 25 percent of U.S. weather stations that are in undisturbed, rural areas have shown a consistent, significant cooling trend since 1940. Heat islands don't influence the world's weather, but they do affect most of the world's thermometers.

This negates half of Russell's article, mostly the fun part about the sky falling and the people uprising. The part that's left is still chilling news: nobody knows what the greenhouse gases will do to us. It follows, then, that all of Russell's "experts" are either indulging in clearly avowed speculation (an honored activity that scientists call "arm-waving"), projecting scenarios like good soldiers but on the basis of false assumptions, or grandstanding to get more money out of somebody else.

The real scientific community knows all of this. That is why, for instance, Don Anderson, president of the 22,000-member American Geophysical Union, recently called for better coordinated research on ozone depletion, buildup of greenhouse gases, ocean pollution and deforestation (*Earth in Space*, December 1988)—not seawall construction. Or why William Tanner of Florida State University's geology department, reporting on a climatology meeting, noted a "general dissatisfaction with currently popular misuse of the greenhouse concept" (*Eos*, Dec. 27, 1988).

The scientists will tell us when they've made up their minds. Until then, all the steps we can take as individuals to consume fewer resources—including critiques of capitalism—are worth doing for their own sake; but the government should "don't just do something, stand there." And press and public alike, when listening to the latest batch of Chicken Littles, should keep firmly in mind what the Firesign Theatre's Happy Harry Cox told us: "All I know is, everything you know is wrong."

Andrew L. Alden
Concord, Calif.

Dick Russell replies: Andrew L. Alden's implication that urban "heat islands" have not been taken into account in global climate models is untrue. Scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies have found that, without correcting for such urban effects, global warming over the past century has risen 0.7 degrees Centigrade. When all cities with a population of 100,000 or more are factored out of the same model, global warming is reduced only slightly, to 0.6 degrees

Centigrade. Similar conclusions have been reached independently by a team of British scientists.

It is correct that the U.S. as a whole did experience a cooling-off period between 1940 and 1970, following the hot, dry "Dust Bowl" era of the '30s. But since 1970, the temperature rise in this country and elsewhere around the world has been marked. The '80s have witnessed the five hottest years since recordkeeping began more than a century ago.

As for Alden's mention of Don Anderson's call for better coordinated research into the greenhouse effect and other environmental problems, Dr. Anderson responded in a telephone conversation with *In These Times*: "Yes, I have called for studies to understand more about our planet. But this certainly does not contradict the evidence of the greenhouse effect. There is controversy over whether global warming has begun, but no controversy at all that greenhouse gases are building up. It is just a matter of time before there will be no controversy about the higher temperature effects' being real. I am not calling for more research to avoid doing anything practical about this. We definitely can't afford to wait until all the results are in."

If Alden's call to "don't do something, stand there" continues to be the policy of governments around the world, that stand will likely be remembered along with Custer's—if there are any historians left to chronicle the folly. Or, as a song long predating Jerry Garcia put it, "it won't be water, but the fire next time."

Facing Germany's past

DIANE JOHNSTONE'S REPORT ON THE JENNINGER affair (ITT, Dec. 7, 1988) repeats a common misunderstanding of GDR policy. She states: "For the first time, the German Democratic Republic has agreed to pay compensation to Jewish victims, as the Federal Republic has done for years."

This is incorrect. Since the founding of the East German state in 1949, the GDR has paid compensation to all Jewish as well as Gypsy, Social Democratic, Communist and other victims of fascism living in the GDR. Compensation has consisted of special pensions, special housing privileges, medical care, social services and other forms of public recognition, including regular invitations to speak to junior high school classes about their experiences. In early 1953, the Federal Republic cut off payments to Jewish victims living in the GDR as part of a campaign to encourage emigration from the other German state.

In November 1988 the GDR agreed to make restitution payments to Jewish victims living outside the country. Unfortunately, Johnstone's article perpetuates the

mainstream press prejudice that the FRG has somehow been more forthcoming in acknowledging the past.

The GDR was indeed quick to assume the mantle of anti-fascism after the war, primarily because the majority of its postwar leadership had spent the war either in exile or in concentration camps. Toward the end of the war, Germans had many reasons for preferring to surrender to the Americans rather than to the Russians or even the British. As anti-communism rapidly became more important to the Western allies in the post-war period, the remaining higher and mid-level Nazi functionaries rapidly left the East (where they were actively pursued and prosecuted and barred from public service), expecting and receiving much more sympathetic treatment in the West. As a result, higher level Nazis were not present in the East after the early '50s.

What did not change in either the Eastern or the Western parts of Germany was the broad mass of the population which either actively supported or acquiesced to Hitler and continued to harbor the same racist, nationalist and anti-Semitic sentiments as before. Whether the GDR's constant emphasis of the tradition of the Communist Party and the anti-fascist resistance (celebrated in film, drama and literature) has been more successful in transforming this basic social consensus than the FRG's payments to Israel and insistence on freedom from collective guilt remains to be seen. Both approaches gloss over the sticky question of individual responsibility.

To date, the most important book addressing the fascist past from the viewpoint of a young, "ordinary German" in Nazi Germany, Christa Wolf's *Kindheitsmuster* (translated as either *A Model Childhood* or *Patterns of Childhood*) was written and first published in the GDR. Wolf was still a teenager in 1945, as was Peter Jenninger. Jenninger's recent spectacular failure to present the response of an average German to the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom, illustrated the West's continuing dilemma. Fifty years of guilt and denial have left it as incapable of confronting itself as it was in 1945. Before the West Germans can "master" their past, they will have to look it in the face.

Dorothy Rosenberg
Assistant Professor of German
Portland State University
Portland, Ore.

Abortion

DENSE RINALDO WOULD NOT BE SO PUZZLED about the lack of public enthusiasm for abortion (ITT, Dec. 21, 1988) if she took more than a cursory look at national polls. For years Gallup has consistently shown

about 25 percent of Americans in favor of abortion without restriction; some 20 percent reject it under any circumstances. The majority accept it in cases of rape, incest or maternal health problems. In facile analysis these percentages can appear to mean overwhelming support for abortion.

When it is recognized, however, that the special circumstances the majority consider important apply only to well under 1 percent of all pregnancies, the fallacy of such analysis is glaring. The fact is that three out of four Americans reject abortion on demand—which is the point at issue.

Edward M. Corbett
Commerce, Texas

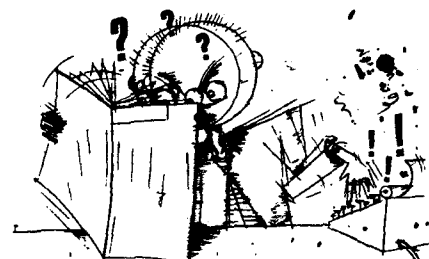
Non sequitur

YOUR HAUGHTY DISMISSAL OF WHAT YOU TERM "sect" parties (ITT, Dec. 7, 1988)—Socialist, Socialist Worker's, etc.—manages to conveniently ignore that in two decades of working with the Democratic Party, Democratic Socialists of America has also achieved diddly-squat, unless of course you look at Mondale and Dukakis as being victories.

Working as I do in a non-unionized factory for low wages and few benefits, I can attest that things down here among the peasantry have gotten worse, not better. My buying power is deteriorating, my expenditures are increasing, and if Blue Cross and Blue Shield go up again I probably will no longer be able to afford health care for my family (I now pay \$70 every other week).

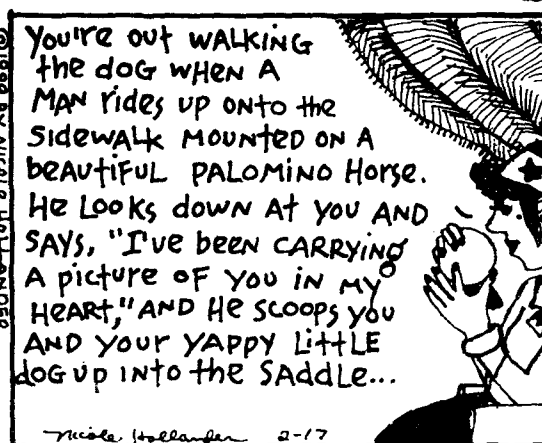
So what I am attempting to point out here is that all your grand strategizing of "taking over" the Democratic Party and turning it somehow into a force for socialism has not aided me or my family or the people I work with one bit. We still punch the time clock, still put in eight miserable hours for little return, still scrape to get by. You should try it sometime.

Jeffrey M. McHale
Throop, Pa.



Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



By Carmen Mayer

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, *PERESTROIKA* IS mainly considered a joke—or rather, hundreds of them. Most Czechs call it “science fiction,” and the latest shake-up in the country’s political leadership has only vindicated this skepticism. President Gustav Husák has remained in office, along with hard-line Politburo and Central Committee member Vasil Bilák and Communist Party General-Secretary Miloš Jakeš—despite their roles as opponents of the 1968 Prague Spring (a liberalization similar to *perestroika*) and as organizers of harsh persecution of liberals in its aftermath. The recent ousters or resignations of more progressive officials has even strengthened the three leaders’ plans for cautious reforms that would not lessen central planning and control. The Czechoslovak population’s alienation is unmistakably expressed in hundreds of lampoons that ridicule the leaders’ presumed incompetence and limited intelligence.

For decades, ordinary Czechs and Slovaks have been living a two-sided existence—a combination of Kafka’s *The Trial* and Hašek’s *Good Soldier Švejk*. Like Kafka’s hero, who was tortured and ultimately destroyed by a bureaucratic nightmare, the Czechoslovak people find no escape. But like Hašek’s hero, who couldn’t change reality, they escape by ridiculing it.

“Better to growl and submit,” says Ivan Denisovich in Solzhenitsyn’s masterpiece. “If you were stubborn, they broke you.” In 1938 the entire Czech nation stood ready to meet the Nazi challenge, only to be broken by friends and allies who ordered it to cede one-third of its territory to Hitler at the Munich Conference. Since then a lot more submitting has taken place. In 1948 a new friend and ally—Stalin—betrayed every promise of an independent national existence. In the following years, even those who accepted Communism as a means of eliminating social injustice were stunned by the nationalization of all property, including small farms and family businesses, despite the new Communist leadership’s solemn pledge not to do so. Still, all hope for a new beginning did not vanish. In 1968 it swept the nation with breathtaking vitality. Again, it was crushed. Was the application of the Brezhnev Doctrine—and the resulting occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces—so traumatic that nothing was left to welcome the renewed



“Perestroika—What for? I already have everything.”

Czechoslovakia’s sad joke

liberalization attempts of today?

Out the window: In the past Czechs and Slovaks attempted or achieved liberation through the overthrow of a government, regime or some representatives of hated state power—if, in some cases, only by throwing them out the window. (In 1419 the burgo-master and several councilors were thrown out the window of the Prague City Hall and killed by the people outside, which caused the death of the king, who had a seizure when hearing the news; in 1618 the defenestration of two governors triggered the Thirty Years’ War.) From the Hussites (a religious, nationalistic and democratic movement in the 15th century) to the founding fathers of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, freedom and change came about from popular opposition to official state power.

Alexander Dubček, the architect of the 1968 reforms that prompted the Warsaw Pact occupation, was the first government official to stand for a different kind of regime than the one he was called to represent. Dubček initiated his career as Communist Party leader with reform and liberalization. His energy was directed against the real holders of power in Moscow. In this sense, his policy confirmed the established historic pattern. By contrast, the present restructuring efforts concern form rather than substance and are therefore viewed by the Czechoslovak people as merely a means of political survival for leaders whose careers have revolved around the practices of the Stalin and Brezhnev eras. All their appeals to promote initiative in changing economic and

social relations are dismissed by a surprisingly worldly Czechoslovak public as lip service and propaganda.

Perestroika as status quo: Propagated by the government, *perestroika* is perceived as a further encroachment of the state rather than liberation from it. Indeed, its implementation would cause hardship to many. The practice of expending as little time and effort as possible for the sole employer in the country, the state—in accordance with the adage “if you don’t steal from the state, you are stealing from your family”—has been universally accepted. Only someone who knows little about life in a state-run economy would take such an outlook for dishonesty.

In socialist economies, this Marxist tenet in reverse has become a principle of justice. The state, replacing the exploitative bourgeoisie, pockets all surplus value by paying low wages—so low, in fact, that some are below the subsistence level. It is now up to the individual to “denationalize” nails, tools, spare parts, produce—or, in the case of white-collar workers, office time—and to shop, write private letters, knit or sew during working hours, not to mention to enjoy interminable coffee breaks. In this way, energies are saved for the moonlighting jobs after work, which bring in the real income, or for commodities not obtainable on the official market. Weekends are reserved for all-out exercise in privately owned country houses.

Perestroika requires that more physical and mental energy be applied on the job in exchange for slightly increased wages. But money is less appreciated in Czechoslovakia than in the West, where it can buy anything. Demand still exceeds by far the supply of things beyond food and other necessities, which themselves are not expensive. The only population group needing increased income to afford even those necessities are retired men and women (retirement age is 55 for women and 60 for men). Because they are the only ones who nurture memories of private enterprise, they are thus the most likely group to take up the challenges of economic restructuring. Yet many are tired, or they have settled as indispensable baby sitters of their grandchildren. In most Slavic nations the emotional rewards of an extended family still take precedence over uncertain material gains.

How many among the younger generation

have the necessary skills to invest, organize, manage, manufacture, test the market and train employees? It takes expertise and a spirit of enterprise or adventure to shoulder such responsibilities. Yet in 40 years of collective ownership, where all the planning and deciding was done by party bureaucrats, all these qualities have been systematically suppressed. Producers are left more alienated and divorced from the creative process of production than their proletarian predecessors in Marx’s time. The only difference lies in being provided benefits—free health insurance, unemployment compensation, pensions, vacations, treatments in health spas—that further reduce the need for problem-solving. Even Lenin couldn’t make his new economic policy—a partial return to private enterprise—work without importing experts from abroad and leasing industries to foreign entrepreneurs.

Visitors from capitalist countries join the media in urging their Czechoslovak friends to stop growling or joking, and instead to organize protest gatherings and to write letters to government officials. Most respond with objections motivated by fear and the haunting knowledge of past reprisals. What about Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov? Is his *perestroika* real? Definitely, is the general answer, and immediately he is compared to the native Dubček. But the smile and obvious animation are soon transformed into apprehension: “How long will Gorbachov last?”

Real changes: One visible sign of relaxation in Czechoslovakia is the availability of vouchers for imported goods. Formerly reserved to foreigners with hard currency, vouchers are now available at the entrance to special state stores. People who sell them aren’t arrested and are even allowed to keep foreign money without having to explain its origin and exchange it for domestic currency at official rates. Regular department stores and boutiques sell fancy clothing of good quality. French cosmetics and perfumes and American Marlboro cigarettes are produced in license. But sizes and color of outfits are limited, and most prices are too high for average employees who lack skills or goods for the black market. Still, an American tourist was overheard to judge women in Prague as “elegant and well-dressed.”

Certain actions would convince people that *perestroika* is not just a word. If the borders to Western countries were opened to unrestricted travel without dozens of permits, and if one were allowed to exchange Czech money for hard currency, pessimism would be turned into general acclaim. Almost everyone in Czechoslovakia is at least bilingual, and numerous cultural ties to other civilizations are woven into the consciousness of the people through their education in history, art, music and literature.

Dubček himself displayed the national characteristic of craving the experience of foreign travel by enacting the right of every citizen to a passport. This may have been the crucial point of his reform program that secured him the enthusiastic support of his entire nation. The present and future governments in Czechoslovakia would do well to remember it.

Carmen Mayer is an associate professor of political science at Temple University.

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By Marjorie Hope
and James Young

Even doctors are prescribing a real national health scheme

TODAY INCREASING NUMBERS OF AMERICANS are bitterly aware that in this bountiful land they have no health care. At least 37 million people have no coverage, and some 20 million others have inadequate coverage. Countless others go without essential immunization and prenatal care. Yet the portion of the U.S. gross national product devoted to health care continues to grow—it's now close to 12 percent, or 40 percent more per capita than any other developed country. Per capita, Americans spend about four times as much as Britons do under their much-maligned public health system.

Incremental changes aimed at controlling costs have proved abortive. Payment based on diagnosis-related groups (DRGs) has resulted in a federal enforcement bureaucracy costing tens of millions of dollars. Likewise, health maintenance organizations (HMOs) have become mired in fierce competition that is already undercutting their promise of combining quality care and economy. Nursing-home chains are in trouble financially and their quality is questionable. Administrative expenses continue to rise—consuming at least 22 percent of U.S. health spending.

Despite their generally high incomes, physicians, too, are frustrated. They—or their ever-expanding staffs—spend countless hours on billing. They also feel caught between hospital administrators pressing for early discharge and elderly patients with no help at home. And they sense a growing loss of autonomy. As one doctor put it: "I feel like an employee of the insurance companies."

Even though attempts to control costs have failed, most talk of reform is couched in terms of patching up the system—a structure based on private insurance.

But a new movement for a truly public insurance program is growing. Significantly, it is forming among physicians themselves. The nationwide 1,200-member group known as Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP) is getting set for a long fight. But it has laid the groundwork in a plan that would cut administrative costs and thus pay for expanded coverage without aggravating government budget problems. In brief, their plan:

- would provide universal and comprehensive coverage under one scheme;
- would include preventive, curative, mental health, occupational, rehabilitative and dental care, as well as prescription drugs;
- would pay operating expenses of hospitals on an annual lump sum basis;
- would provide three payment options for doctors and other practitioners—fee-for-service, salaried positions in institutions receiving global prospective budgets, and salaried positions within group practice;
- would gradually phase out private insurance plans that duplicate the national health plan; and
- initially could be funded through a pool of current resources such as employers and Medicare, but ultimately would be paid for by the federal government, preferably through progressive taxes.

When the plan was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on January 12,

the American Medical Association (AMA) announced it opposed a single source of medical payments controlled by the government, and didn't think Americans would want to stand in the long waiting lines the critics say the proposed system would create. But Steffie Woolhandler, a doctor at Cambridge Hospital in Cambridge, Mass., and co-chair of the plan's writing committee, says: "That's distortion. In Canada—whose successful national plan served somewhat as our model—people wait no longer than we do now. But a lot of the doctors endorsing our plan belong to the AMA, and we feel sure there are many others in AMA who will."

Overall, the reception to the proposal was favorable. Joseph O'Connor, head of the AMA-affiliated Massachusetts Medical Society, gave it his qualified approval. Many newspapers covered it sympathetically. *New England Journal* editor, Arnold Relman, while not specifically endorsing the plan, observed that a comprehensive program "will happen, but not immediately."

Insurance companies object: Predictably, a spokesperson for the Health Insurance Company of America expressed the "feeling that the American public does not want a monolithic system," but it is no longer easy to make a case that this is so. Despite objections that doctors won't accept salaried practice, that such a plan destroys the traditional physician-patient relationship, that it means government control over medical decisions or that the private sector is more efficient, virtually every poll in the past 30 years has shown that the great majority of Americans support a universal, comprehensive, publicly administered national health program.

The AMA's own figures show that 50 percent of all physicians are employed by someone else at least part time. Patients' experience and doctors' testimony suggest that bureaucratic third-party interference is already upsetting the doctor-patient relationship; removing the money factor could only strengthen it. As for government control, research by Harvard medical economist Rashi Fein shows that even though Britain's national health service is state-owned, the government is actually less intrusive in clinical decisions and has fewer regulations than in the U.S. Moreover, notwithstanding a *New York Times* report, PNHP does not propose a centralized, government-operated program. It would be administered largely at the state and local levels.

Indeed, one might well question the efficiency of the current system, which is based on 1,500 health-insurance providers (many of which offer dozens of competing plans), allows overlapping coverage, and bills for each item. For example, a man who received a bill for \$1.50 for a medication used by a doctor sent it to Medicare for 80 percent reimbursement, then he submitted the balance—30 cents—to his secondary insurance. And Woolhandler cites another example of the current system's failings: an elderly woman unable to afford her diabetes drugs went into shock, was hospitalized and had to have her leg amputated. The economic cost alone was many times that for

the drugs.

"The PNHP plan would simplify all this," says David Himmelstein, co-chair of the writing committee. "Patients would never see a bill for covered services. The plan would eliminate co-payments and deductibles, which are unwieldy and expensive to administer. Simplified global-prospective budgeting would free up resources for more care. Eliminating insurance companies, with their paperwork, advertising and profits would mean substantial savings. In Canada—where private coverage for services included under the national program has been eliminated—administrative spending amounts to about 12 percent, in contrast to 22 percent here."

PNHP favors the Canadian over the British model because the latter allows a private parallel system, making it possible for the Tory government to underfund the national service and then point to the "superiority" of the private sector.

The other plans: How does the PNHP plan differ from the other health proposals most likely to be subjects of discussion?

While Massachusetts' celebrated "Dukakis model," which is based on private insurance and some public subsidy, does extend coverage to many people, the plan still leaves large numbers uninsured, fails to help the underinsured (such as low-income elderly) and fails to contain administrative costs. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) is sponsoring a bill requiring employers to pay 80 percent of the premiums for all employees working at least 17.5 hours a week, as well as their dependents. President Bush has opposed universal health plans but proposed expanding Medicaid to help the medically indigent. A "consumer choice" proposal published by economist Alain Enthoven in the *New England Journal* is based on qualified managed health-care plans, which would compete for contracts with employers or state-level public sponsors; it is designed to "represent incremental, not radical change." A bill by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) envisions a government-operated but community-controlled system, with providers on salary.

With the exception of the Dellums proposal—which is probably too utopian to gain political acceptance—all these plans have important features in common: they maintain the present complicated insurance network, do nothing to reduce the bureaucracy (and can even add another stratum of overseers) and, by leaving means-tested Medicaid intact, perpetuate our two-class system.

PNHP, with its single, universal, public plan will indeed be branded "radical." Its members also speak of further problems in the U.S. medical system—problems rarely mentioned by middle-of-the-road planners, such as the high cost of medical education, racial inequities in access to service and the need for grass-roots health education. While it does not have an immediate plan to solve all these problems, PNHP sees a national health program as a framework for addressing them.

What are the proposal's political prospects? Perhaps not so gloomy as the professional pundits would have it. True, there will

be bitter opposition from the insurance industry, medical entrepreneurs and companies that do not now offer health benefits. On the other hand, many large corporate employers are becoming less interested in getting big government off their backs than in getting big insurance premiums off their backs. Not only a majority of rank-and-file Americans, but most physicians (56 percent), support some form of national health program, according to studies cited by PNHP. The 37 million Americans without coverage are more likely than Medicaid beneficiaries to be voters. If mobilized, these varied constituencies could form a powerful political force for fundamental change. ■

Marjorie Hope and James Young are associate professors of sociology at Wilmington College of Ohio. They are the authors of *The Faces of Homelessness*.

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LIFE IN THE U.S.

By Mark Feinberg

DR. HANZ PRINZHORN'S BOOK, *The Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, was called The Bible by many of the German Expressionist painters. Psychiatrist Prinzhorn's book displayed the artwork of patients he had worked with in the 1920s. Some artists followed Prinzhorn's lead; Max Ernst and Wassily Kandinsky even went into asylums to study with artistic mental patients.

While Europeans have long been interested in the creativity of artists who live outside cultural and psychological norms, such artwork has not had a large following in the U.S. But that is changing now, as the work of the mentally ill, prisoners and the homeless is finding its way into the public spotlight. Recent "outsider" or "visionary art" exhibits in Boston, Baltimore, New York and elsewhere have gained increasing attention in art circles. And a proposed national museum of visionary art in Baltimore may create a national focus for the growing public interest.

Rebecca Puharich, who is spearheading the Baltimore effort, says that a "need and compulsion to create" gives the artwork a rare degree of "honesty and power." The Baltimore museum, which would be housed in a police station built in 1896, would be modeled on the Art Brut museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, founded by artist Jean Dubuffet. Art Brut is only one of about 12 such museums in Europe that display the artwork of various "outsiders."

Outsider art discarded: Puharich's project is partly motivated by a desire to save striking pieces of art that would otherwise be discarded. Outsiders create exciting art because, as Puharich says, "they fiercely followed their own inner instincts." With the deinstitutionalization of mental patients in the '70s, she says, much of this art, stored in back wards, was thrown out.

Puharich works to find visionary



Detail from "Marilyn's Coat": intricate needlework by a schizophrenic whose keepers claimed she did "nothing useful."

Outsider art seeks shelter

art even without a museum on hand to store it. Recently she was excited when she got word of a sighting of a homeless man and his "horse." She

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had been trying to track down the man, whom she knew of only through an eight-year-old newspaper clipping. The man had built the horse on wheels, hanging all his possessions on it, so he could roll it around after him.

Nearly all visionary art falls between the cracks. But one famous

piece is displayed in the Smithsonian Institution, created by Washington janitor James Hampton. He had collected odd scraps of tinfoil for years, fashioning them into a beautiful throne awaiting Christ's Second Coming. The throne was discovered only after Hampton's death, when his landlord went into the artist's apartment to clean.

Puharich connects her artistic interest with a broad political concern. "Art in a society is a very powerful expression," she says. "When you have a right, fascist government, free expression is very threatening." Hit-

ler, like other Europeans, saw a connection between the artistry of the mentally ill and that of respected artists. But, unlike Dr. Prinzhorn, Hitler didn't like what he saw and staged the infamous "Degenerate Art Show." The exhibit juxtaposed artwork by painters such as Klimt and Kokoschka alongside artwork of the mentally ill. The subtitles by the works read: "Dangerous to Look At," and "See, You Cannot Tell the Difference."

Rehabilitating perceptions: If Baltimore gives Puharich's organization, People Encouraging People, ap-

proval to go ahead on the project—and a decision is slated for this month—they will need to raise about \$5 million. Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream has agreed to waive franchise fees and help create a dairy restaurant, with decor and a menu in keeping with the museum's creative theme.

The planners hope the museum will help rehabilitate the public's perception of outsiders like the mentally ill. But at the same time the museum's organizers hope to provide a high visibility, high quality rehabilitative program that will also offer non-artists a way to be involved with the center. Visitors will come into contact with mentally ill people who will staff the museum's cafe, gift shop and janitorial department.

Some visitors to visionary art exhibits associate the emerging genre with art therapy, but there are important distinctions. While art therapists have worked with groups in institutions for years, visionary art is often unconnected to therapeutic sessions. Polish artist Bolek Greczynski, for example, works alongside mentally ill artists in New York City on a project called "Battlefields." Greczynski calls himself a co-creator, not an art therapist.

The artists work together on the large Battlefields project in a 20,000-square-foot studio. Different rooms are devoted to different themes. Greczynski, who has been involved in other social and political projects, says he and the artists become friends while spending a lot of time on the project. "If therapy is not your goal," says the co-creator, "it's the best therapy.... I ignore that side of their life."

With luck, projects like Battlefields and Puharich's museum will help counter the stereotype of the creative artist as the genius gone mad. Such projects would accentuate outsiders' positive, creative side—aspects of their personalities that are too often ignored. ■

Mark Feinberg is a Massachusetts freelance writer.

U.S. foreign policy still speaking in tongues

By Tom Engelhardt

Brent Scowcroft [the new National Security Council adviser] and Lawrence S. Eagleburger, who has been chosen for the key position of Deputy Secretary of State...are so close they often communicate in garbled Serbo-Croatian.

New York Times, Jan. 17, 1989

RUMORS OF A "LANGUAGE PANIC" at the State Department and the National Security Council by desperate jobholders and prospective appointees to the Bush foreign policy team led me to track down a teacher of the

rare language in question. Serban Dubrovnik, a lanky, mustachioed man in his early 60s, had something of a dazed look as he opened the door of his apartment in northwest Washington, D.C. "Oh, I thought you were another one of them," he said quietly in his heavily accented English.

I inquired curiously who they might be, and he admitted a bit hesitantly that for almost a week he had been under siege from members of Foggy Bottom desperate to pick up the basics of the language.

"You know," he said, seating me on his sofa and offering me bitter tea

in a handleless glass cup, "for years I barely made a living. Other than the odd professor curious to master Cyrillic documents or the liturgies of the church, why would anyone come to me? And, of course, what work there was was always in the written, never the spoken, language."

"You mean," I asked, a bit startled, "that the spoken language is not normally taught?"

He laughed a deep, throaty, remarkably melodic laugh. "It's almost a miracle to have two such speakers in your government! In my whole country you can go miles at a time without finding a single person who can speak the old language."

As we talked, I heard the constant ringing of his phone in the background and the whisper of voices recording onto his answering machine, begging, pleading, offering

perks for a brief half-hour of his time.

"Eight tones!" he said suddenly. "Imagine eight intonations! And modern Serbo-Croatian is difficult enough with only four. It takes months and months just to master

ANALYSIS

the tones! And then the declensions, you can't begin to believe..." At this point he stopped himself. "You know, teachers of Garbled English are a dime a dozen, but other than Mr. Scowcroft and Mr. Eagleburger, I may be the only person in America to speak, no less teach, Garbled Serbo-Croatian!" He sighed. "What I would give for just half an hour of their time! Sometimes, living here, I grow so lonely to hear another voice speaking my language."

A quiet knock on the door caused

him to jump to his feet. "Quickly," he said and shooed me down the long corridor of his railroad apartment. "This," he added, opening a door, "is the service exit. I am so sorry, but the one knocking, he is important. No one must know he is here." And suddenly the door closed behind me with a sigh of its own.

A call later in the day to the Yugoslav embassy elicited only a terse "no comment," but an ambassador from a non-slavic country was willing to say, under a cloak of anonymity, "As far as we're concerned, America's foreign policy has long been conducted in Garbled Serbo-Croatian, so we can't believe this will be perceived as much of a breakthrough on a global scale." ■

Tom Engelhardt is an editor at Pantheon books.

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IN THE ARTS

By Pat Aufderheide

IT'S PRETTY CHEAP TO MAKE A VIDEO-cassette copy. But it's still expensive to produce what's on the videocassette, even if you're working in video instead of film. And right there is the rub for any consumers who may still be waiting for diversity to come to them through the wonders-of-technology pipeline.

But as *In These Times* has showcased (see *In These Times*, Dec. 14, 1988), it's possible to turn your home VCR into a window to alternatives, particularly if you can interest your school, university, community group or church in purchasing or renting tapes. Subsidy for production, through such agencies as the national endowments for the arts and humanities, helps lower the cost to some producers, who may pass on their breaks to buyers, and sometimes firms producing social-issue material are willing to discuss rental and even a break on the price for special needs. Check out each of the videos reviewed below, and grouped by issue, for individual prices.

Regional culture: Appalshop, a media center located in the small town of Whitesburg, Ky., has been defying the law of cultural homogenization for years. Of course, it's located in Appalachia, which has been defying that law for centuries now. Appalshop, which depends for a third of its funding on grants, has recently adopted a home-video pricing policy for some of its more popular films and videos. Appalshop started as a film workshop, but has branched out into, among other things, a regular TV show, *Headwaters*. The new releases reviewed below are only a sampling of Appalshop's offerings. Others of interest may be *Red Fox Second Hangin'*, a storytelling performance in which three storytellers recount the history of late 19th-century Appalachia through the remarkable adventures of a local healer; and *Lord and Father*, a documentary made by the son of a tobacco farmer about his conflicts with his father over inheriting a business and a way of life the son finds unjust. Write Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, KY 41858 for the catalogue.

Long Journey Home, an hour-long film documentary by Elizabeth Barrett, is the second (after *Strangers and Kin*) of an Appalachian history series, told from a sometimes acerbic grass-roots perspective that counters *Beverly Hillsbillies* and "Li'l Abner" stereotypes. The film introduces us to Anndrena Belcher, one of the 3 million emigrants from Appalachia over the recent decades of joblessness. Anndrena, who left as a child, moves back and becomes a community organizer for others who want to return. Through Anndrena's story, the film flashes back to a history of Appalachia. It also tracks the Hardin family's return from Baltimore to a rural life that teeters on



Inside Life Outside has the bite of a Fassbinder film, the punch of an Almodóvar comedy, and the grit of video verité.

Home rules and the video alternatives

the edge of paralyzing poverty and balances itself with pride. Without undue romanticism, *Long Journey Home's* personal stories dramatize the contradictions of Appalachia today.

Harriette Simpson Arnow 1908-1986, a 35-minute homage by Herb E. Smith, introduces readers of *The Dollmaker* to its author, a funny, stubborn, loving and fiercely professional woman. The core of the film is a series of interviews with Arnow, whose tales of writing, both while running a family in wartime Detroit and in Appalachia on a farm that refused to yield a living, are both poignant and inspiring. Much of Arnow's own life went into her books, but she also emphasizes the imaginative side of her creative work.

On Our Own Land, the newest *Headwaters* documentary, is a half-hour program by Anne Johnson. It dramatizes an enduring conflict between the people who live on the land and strip miners who remove it. Strip miners have claimed the right to seize land in order to harvest the coal below it, through the once-widely-signed broadform deed—a legal document that ceded mineral rights. The program is both topical and enduring. It was shown weeks before Kentucky voters last November overwhelmingly passed a constitutional amendment revoking the validity of the deed. At the same time, it illustrates a conflict that won't go away, in which the texture of community is pitted against the drive toward profit at any cost. Scrupulously balanced, it lets coal

operators damn themselves with their own words.

The homeless: Homelessness in America (see *In These Times*, Sept. 28, 1988) exposes much more than those who huddle over grates. Two recent works use personal dramas to illuminate social questions.

The hour-long documentary *Promises to Keep* (Durrin Productions, 1748 Kalorama Rd. NW, Washington, DC 20009) profiles the

VIDEO

problem of homelessness through the attempt by the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) in Washington, D.C., to establish a shelter in an abandoned building. CCNV leader Mitch Snyder eventually went on a hunger strike to secure the shelter, pushing an unwilling Reagan administration to acknowledge the problem and confront it, at least in one building. Snyder is a spiky personality, and his sharp edges are not ignored in this understated but effective work by veteran documentarist Ginny Durrin (*The Aids Movie*, *Kevin's Story*, *Worker to Worker*). In counterpoint to Snyder's personalist attack on the problem is the federal government's behind-the-scenes bureaucratic manipulation to impede the effort. One Mitch Snyder can't change the housing crisis, the video implies, but inhumane policies create such confrontations.

Inside Life Outside, an hour-long video produced by Sachiko Hamada and Scott Sinkler (New Day Films, 853 Broadway, Suite 1210, New York, NY 10003), is a commandingly fas-

cinating record of the producers' two-and-a-half year acquaintance with a homeless group on New York's Lower East Side. It has the bite of a Fassbinder film, the punch of an Almodóvar comedy, and the grit of video verité. Delia and Mike, a homeless couple who lost custody of their five children as they scabbled for survival, constructed shantytown housing on a series of vacant lots. With help from the Center for Constitutional Rights, they sued the mayor and the city, claiming their makeshift housing as a protest against the city's housing policies.

The video plunges the viewer into the improvisational daily life of ingenious, temperamental and compassionate people, living under plastic and surrounded by junk. They work, fight with each other, illegally wire the shacks and open fire hyd-

rants to bathe in full view of the camera. They also watch TV. *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, seen by Delia and Mike as they sip wine from a bottle and worry about their court case, delivers all the audiovisual irony you need (there is no narration).

The camera work is competent, but the editing is superb, allowing a story without easy moral lessons to emerge. The ad-hoc family that grows up within this shantytown is no collection of saints. But you can't help being outraged that such wit, will and intelligence is being poured into bare survival at the bottom of the social heap.

Criminal justice: Facets Video (1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614) has recovered and released on video a classic in persuasive documentary made in 1962 by William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*, *To Live and Die in L.A.*). *The People vs. Paul Crump* won Friedkin several awards and launched his career, but has not been seen for a generation. The film chronicles, by re-enactment, a payroll robbery and murder that resulted in the arrest of Paul Crump and four others, and delivers a sympathetic portrait of Paul Crump as he faced a sentence of death, then commuted to life imprisonment. (After long maintaining his innocence, he later confessed to the crime; he is still in prison). The film challenges easy assumptions about the death penalty, and raises chilling questions still relevant today about due process and the quality of the penal system. ■

© 1989 Pat Aufderheide



Mitch Snyder with Granny in *Promises to Keep*.

Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia
By Altina L. Waller
University of North Carolina Press
313 pp., \$12.50

By Rick Wilson

The Hatfields and McCoys: some feud for thought

THE HATFIELD-MCCOY FEUD IS AN established part of American folklore and popular culture. Mere mention of it conjures up images of bearded mountaineers lawlessly slaughtering rival clans in revenge for an ancient insult or simply for the sheer joy of killing. The feudist mythos remains a part of the century-old stereotype of Appalachian people. Altina Waller's *Feud* attempts a deeper understanding of the famous skirmishes between the West Virginia Hatfields and the Kentucky McCoys by examining the region's social history in the context of its industrialization and colonization by outside capitalist interests.

The feud took place in the valley of the Tug Fork River that separates West Virginia and Kentucky. The same area would later be the site of an episode in the mine wars portrayed in John Sayles' film *Matewan*. The real feud does not exactly live up to the epic proportions of the myth, however: it lasted only 12 years and claimed only 12 lives. The unprecedented feud shocked the entire mountain community.

The leading antagonists were Old Ranel (Randolph) McCoy and the colorful Devil Anse (Anderson) Hatfield. During the Civil War Hatfield was the leader of the Confederate guerrilla "Logan Wildcats" and was known as the best marksman and horseman in the area. He earned his "Devil" nickname by singlehandedly fighting a mountain lion during his youth, after which his mother remarked that he "wasn't afraid of the devil himself." Curiously, many Tug Valley residents, although they did not own slaves, sided with the Confederacy for reasons of local autonomy.

No easy answers: According to Waller, the usual explanations of the feud do not hold up to close examination. Some have suggested it originated during the war, but even Old Ranel McCoy fought with Devil Anse in the Logan Wildcats. Excessive devotion to family is another common explanation, but records indicate there were Hatfields on the McCoy side and vice versa. Another theory is that the region was characterized by a general lawlessness.

In fact, the country courthouse was a central institution on both sides of the river and both families attempted to resolve the dispute through legal means both before and after the outbreaks of violence. Tug Valley residents spent more time in litigation than do most modern-day Americans, although law at the time was interpreted in terms of commu-



nity consensus and tradition. Waller insists that Tug Valley culture was an egalitarian one based on "social stability, localism and aggressive independence from both American and Southern culture," and that residents considered themselves to be "different from and perhaps even in active opposition to" the mainstream.

So what provoked this outburst in such a stable community? First of all, egalitarian culture was based on land ownership (even today, although West Virginia is one of the poorest states, it has one of the highest rates of home ownership). But due to steep terrain, tillable land was scarce and became even scarcer as holdings were traditionally divided equally among the children, which proved problematic in a subsis-

tence-farming economy. A growing population contributed to the scarcity of fish and game, as did hunting limits instituted by state authorities. Additional strains were caused by government attempts to tax the production of homemade whiskey. And local autonomy and traditional and personal ties between residents gradually eroded.

Devil Anse Hatfield was a perfect example of a man caught between the two worlds. On the one hand, he violated community norms by trying to be a capitalist with a vengeance in the timber business; on the other, he was often exploited and cheated by capitalists and creditors who took advantage of his illiteracy. The times they were a-changin'.

The feud itself occurred in two dis-

tinct phases. It began in 1878 when Old Ranel McCoy accused Floyd Hatfield (Anse's cousin) of stealing a hog. A jury composed of six Hatfields and six McCoys cleared Floyd, with a McCoy casting the deciding vote. Two years later, Bill Staton, a witness in the dispute, was killed by two McCoys. A West Virginia jury acquitted the Kentucky McCoys, even though some of their own kin testified against them. Once again, the battle lines were not clearly drawn. At this point Devil Anse went to great lengths to end the strife.

The best man: The most serious incident occurred in Kentucky during the 1882 elections, which, in mountain communities, were social occasions complete with eating, drinking, flirting and swaggering. Three McCoys attempted to pick a fight with Bad Lias (Elias) Hatfield, and when Anse's brother Ellison attempted to break it up by shouting, "I'm the best goddamned man on earth," he was shot and stabbed over two dozen times by the McCoys. Devil Anse had enough. He led a posse that intercepted the McCoys and took them back to West Virginia. The death vigil had begun. For Anse, the prop-

osition was simple: if Ellison lived, so would the McCoys; if he died, so would they. When Ellison died, his killers were taken back across the Tug, tied to a pawpaw bush and executed. Strangely enough, following the executions the feud virtually ended for the next five years. Devil Anse sought to end it, while Old Ranel McCoy sought redress through legal channels. While local residents may have feared and resented Anse, they also seemed to feel that the unfortunate McCoys had "asked for it."

During the interim, Devil Anse suffered additional setbacks. He repeatedly appeared in court and was forced to sell large tracts of land in order to pay debts. Modernizers in the region allied themselves with outside coal, timber and railroad interests and dreamed of "reforming" the mountain communities. It was thought that development would transform the "retarded frontier" mentality of Appalachia's "contemporary ancestors" by turning them into good middle-class citizens and happy wage earners. Major outside capitalist interests began displacing native proto-capitalists by acquiring huge tracts of land and mineral rights through means both fair and foul. For the modernizers, particularly those on the Kentucky side, Devil Anse became a symbol of what needed to be domesticated or exterminated in the mountains.

Waller argues that in the later stages of the feud the Hatfields represented the old traditions of localism and community autonomy, while the McCoys became the unwitting allies of the new forces of capitalist development. The smoke of the battles cleared, and Old Ranel lived out his days operating a ferry, while Devil Anse, weary of strife, moved to Logan. In his old wage he underwent a religious conversion from his membership in "the devil's church—the church of the world" to the traditional Baptist creed. His old world was lost forever, while his descendants accommodated themselves to the new order, often on the side of the new industrialists. One notable exception was an orphan boy raised by a Hatfield family near Matewan. His name was Sid Hatfield, the union miners' hero of the Matewan Massacre who shot it out with company thugs in downtown Matewan and later died treacherously at their hands. Last year the United Mine Workers of America honored his memory by placing a monument on his grave.

Meanwhile, the Tug rolls on and Mother Jones' words still ring true: "There is never peace in West Virginia because there is never justice."

Rick Wilson is a writer living in West Virginia.

Feud attempts a deeper understanding of the famous skirmishes between the Hatfields and the McCoys by examining the region's social history in the context of its industrialization and colonization by outside capitalist interests.

A Bright Shining Lie:
John Paul Vann and America
in Vietnam
By Neil Sheehan
Random House, 861 pp., \$24.95

By Andrew Galarneau

Glowing denunciations from the free-fire zone

THE NAPALM SCARS ARE FADING from the face of Vietnam, but 13 years after the fall of Saigon the U.S. has barely begun to heal. Neil Sheehan set out to change that, to give Americans answers to settle their minds and a hero to soothe their hearts. The 16 years he spent writing *A Bright Shining Lie* was time well spent. To journey through this book is to clear away the haze of shame and leave the roots of America's tumble in the Big Muddy crystal clear.

To tell the story of the U.S.' fall, Sheehan tells the story of John Paul Vann, adviser to a South Vietnamese division. Skeins of reportage are woven around Vann's life to illuminate the deadly misperceptions that were the U.S.' worst enemy in Vietnam.

Creating Viet Cong: On his arrival in 1962, Vann launched what would become his own war-within-the-war against strategies based on the gross misperceptions of generals who rarely saw the war in person. Vann found South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) commanders bombing and shelling villages on the unconfirmed reports of informers. Realizing this created more Viet Cong than it killed, Vann insisted guerrilla wars called

for discriminate weapons like rifles. His superiors ignored him, beefing up the ARVN air force with American planes and pilots while supplying as many tons of artillery rounds as the ARVN batteries could fire.

The air force kept busy by bombing suspected strongholds and "arms factories," blasting more than 100 per week by September 1962.

VIETNAM

"As far as Vann could determine from the evidence in his area," Sheehan writes, "the majority of them were peasant homes." At times, the ARVN's howitzers would launch shells at random into the countryside. One enterprising commander kept his guns firing overtime to boost his profits from selling the brass casings.

Told by Vann what their firepower was doing to civilians, the American command shrugged. At the root of their cavalier attitudes, Sheehan writes, was competition between branches of the American military for a bigger piece of the action. Because restrained air power would dim the prestige of men like Air Force Brigadier Gen. Rollen Anthis, the rain of bombs continued. Invited repeatedly to go afield and see the human costs of his policy, Anthis re-

fused. "It was in Anthis' personal interest and the interest of his institution to believe that bombing furthered the war effort, and so he believed it," writes Sheehan. "Letting himself be confronted with the corpses of women and children would inhibit his ability to bomb with enthusiasm."

In 1966 Sheehan asked Gen. William Westmoreland, the supreme American commander, whether the mounting civilian casualties bothered him. Like many of the book's telling details, Westmoreland's reply resonates weirdly, "Yes, Neil, it is a problem," Westmoreland replied. "But it does deprive the enemy of the population, doesn't it?"

Westmoreland and the other U.S. generals, molded in World War II and Korea, expected to exhaust the Viet Cong in five years, eight at most. They didn't realize the pajama-clad Victor Charlies they scoffed at were scions of warriors who had battled the Chinese for a thousand years before driving them out in 938. Then they beat back invasions launched by each new dynasty until the 1850s. After 2,000 years of prevailing against numerically superior invaders, guerrilla war was practically the national sport, but few Americans took the VC seriously.

Coverup shrugged off: Vann

knew the Vietnamese could be fierce fighters if properly motivated. His problem was that ARVN leaders were chosen for loyalty to the regime, not leadership ability.

He was shocked to find his ARVN equals rarely guided their men in combat, and became livid when he discovered their U.S.-built intelligence network was used to avoid the guerrillas, not fight them. He reported what happened and was again shrugged off.

Incensed by the continuing coverup, Vann leaked the story to the *New York Times* and nearly got canned. He would continue to be the most candid and insightful source in Vietnam for the next decade, speaking the truths Washington did not want to hear.

The U.S. turned a blind eye to graft because their allies were corrupt from top to bottom. An ARVN commission had become a license to steal. The salaries of "ghost" battalions that existed solely on paper bought villas for commanders, while a cut of their real soldiers' pay satisfied the demands from their superiors for "gifts." Bribes freed captured guerrilla leaders and were also demanded from innocents, lest they be labeled guerrillas. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, a member of the ruling junta, earned so much from corruption he founded a bank solely to help funnel funds elsewhere.

In 1972 Vann, whose ability to survive ambushes and firefights had become legendary, was killed in an accident. His chopper crashed in a tri-

bal graveyard and "the one irreplaceable American in Vietnam" died surrounded by the totems of a culture whose subtle strengths would soon cow the invaders yet again.

Most points Sheehan makes about Vietnam have been made before, but never so clearly. His book has sinews of meticulously crafted reporting, of a depth and breadth that, with a nod to Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, makes *A Bright Shining Lie* the most comprehensive volume yet written about Vietnam.

One of the best and brightest reporters in Vietnam, later to obtain the Pentagon Papers and a Pulitzer Prize for the *New York Times*, Sheehan holds your attention without raising his voice. His prose lets the facts and quotes, picked and arranged as reverently as prize orchids, speak for themselves. His analyses, delivered in the same dry-eyed, painstakingly fair fashion, convincingly hammer a stake through the heart of claims the U.S. should merely have tried harder, sooner.

Shades of déjà vu on the evening news lend the book urgency even now, two decades after the Tet offensive. Sheehan draws none of the connections to more recent U.S. interventions, but *A Bright Shining Lie* can be a burning reminder that Washington has yet to reconsider the means or end for which America's spiritual and financial reserves were drained in Vietnam. ■

Andrew Galarneau is a writer living in Williamsville, N.Y.

The King of Children:
A Biography of Janusz
Korczak

By Betty Jean Lifton
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
404 pp., \$22.50

By Karen Field

Passionate potentate and his young subjects

in fictional works like *King Matt the First*, a kind of Eastern-European analogue of *Peter Pan* in which a boy monarch gives grownups lessons in social justice.

The rights of children: Among Korczak's core ideas were the notions that children have rights, including rights to maintain their own

CHILDREN

beliefs, to property, education and decent living conditions, and to judgment by their peers in special Children's Courts; that children should have access to mass media so that they can communicate with each other directly as adults do; and that there should be no status difference between "hand" work and "head" work, "dirty" work and "clean."

Always the first to take his own prescriptions, Korczak was as apt to be found clearing dining hall tables or emptying potties as composing notes for his lectures at Warsaw's Institute of Pedagogy. And he regularly submitted himself to judgment by the Children's Courts, insisting that all teachers and staff do likewise.

Unlike his contemporary, Maria

Montessori, who focused on the child's sense of development and devising a tangible "kit" of learning tools, Korczak was interested in moral development and in creating social relations that would produce adults capable of sustaining a fair and humane polity. And unlike a later progressive educator, A.S. Neill, he sought not to excuse children from the sexual and civic constraints of adult society but rather to forge a common set of human rights and responsibilities that could reasonably embrace both young and old.

To the bitter end: In *King Matt*, Korczak had warned his young readers that "reformers come to a bad end; only after their death do people see that they were right." Lifton conveys both the horror and the nobility of Korczak's own end, which came after two years' agonizing confinement with his Jewish orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto. Twice arrested by the Germans for refusing to wear an identifying armband, Korczak labored ceaselessly to feed his small charges while his own health deteriorated.

Gentile friends made him offers of escape and asylum, but he refused to leave the children, insisting that he could no more abandon them in

such fearful times than desert a sick child in the night. Suddenly, on Aug. 6, 1942, Nazi troops evicted the orphans and their teachers and loaded them on trains to the Treblinka death camp. The calm, orderly march by orphans and staff through Warsaw to the station as they sang an anthem of brotherhood and carried high the green "banner of King Matt" was, in the words of one onlooker, "a procession the like of which no human eye has ever witnessed."

As a biographer, Lifton, who has previously written on adoption, Hiroshima and Vietnamese children, manages to capture her subject's sight, compassion and bravery without plunging into sentimentality or ignoring his very human frailties: his lifelong fear of inheriting his father's madness, a tendency to romanticize

Lifton conveys the horror and nobility of Korczak's end.

"the child" while losing interest in individual children once they reached adolescence, and the need, in later years, to find occasional respite in alcohol.

Some readers will wish that Lifton had provided a more systematic discussion of her subject's theories on child development and of their relevance to contemporary social

thought. It seems, for example, that Korczak anticipated Erving Goffman's "dramaturgical" approach to social analysis by several decades, besides pioneering juvenile justice reform and a comprehensive environmental approach to child abuse, juvenile delinquency and similar social problems. But Lifton fails to highlight the significance of these early efforts or to set them in a broader intellectual context.

Other readers will be left craving more information on the present-day Korczakian movement in order to know how and in what form his work is being transmitted to a new generation. Still, one can only be grateful to Lifton for bringing him to the attention of English-speaking readers in this dramatic, well-researched account. In an age when leaders preach morality to their citizens while cheerfully breaking laws and sewing mayhem overseas, it's bracing to read of a teacher willing to subject himself to the same rules he applies to his pupils. And as more and more former idealists fall prey to despair or to a cynical politics of "realism" which pretends that we must choose between child care and health care, it's equally bracing to encounter a person who could face privation, oppression and, finally, death, yet never lose his hold on decency and grace. ■

Karen Field teaches in the sociology-anthropology department at Washington University.

IN THESE TIMES FEB. 8-14, 1989 21

Colombia

Continued from page 13

smashed through a roadblock of burning tires. An editorial in the Bogotá newspaper *El Tiempo*, mouthpiece of the oligarchy, warns that Colombia is in "the most dangerous moment in its history."

The barn-like cathedral smells of sweat and roses. As the priest drones on, there is no crying in the crowd. Violence is a daily bread Colombians swallow without tears. The requiem concluded, the casket is borne toward the door. The crowd falls in behind. Push. Push. We grind against each other like pebbles in a stream. Someone knocks off my glasses. A sweet-faced boy puts his hand in my pocket. I remove it. Push. Puuush. At last we are out and looking down on the Plaza Bolívar. A light rain is falling. The plaza is a sea of umbrellas. Assassins, assassins, the crowd chants. "A-se-Si-nos. A-se-Si-nos." As the funeral procession flows through the street, young men in blue jeans spray-paint "Samudio asesino" on walls and windows. (Gen. Rafael Samudio is the defense minister.)

At the municipal cemetery young men salute Jaime Pardo by pulling out pistols and firing them into the air, an ironic send-off considering that Pardo opposed violence. A more moving goodbye is given by Gloria Pardo, his wife of 24 years:

"Jaime, my lifelong companion, we will continue living to struggle for your dream of universal justice. We will never renounce the hope of seeing our children living without violence, without hate and in the midst of human brotherhood."

The next day that sound bite is on every radio news show.

Two days later two more Patriotic Union activists are shot down.

Nobody can deny it.

Jaime Pardo is the second to die of those whose names have appeared on a well-publicized death list. The list includes 34 prominent journalists, human rights activists and politicians.

Next to each person's name is written the "crime" he or she committed. In a third of

the cases this has something to do with damaging the power and prestige of the military. (For example, one columnist is accused of being a "slanderer of the armed forces in her journalism.") But in the case of Alfredo Vazquez Carrizosa, the former foreign minister who has become the point man for the Colombian human rights movement, his crime is being a "renegade from the Conservative Party."

I pay a visit to Vazquez. There is a small guardhouse in the front yard of his mansion, but Vazquez himself comes to the door. "You have to go on living. You can't stay shut up in your house," he explains.

"There's no doubt that a dirty war organization exists," he says. "Nobody can deny it."

Sign of the times.

"Say 'no' to subversion."

—sign seen in the Military Museum, Bogotá

Actions speak louder than words.

BOGOTÁ, Nov. 28, 1987—The Colombian government has committed itself to providing more and better protection for the headquarters of the Communist Party and the Patriotic Union, the objects of frequent attacks.

—Inter Press Service

BOGOTÁ, Nov. 29, 1987—City Councilman Froilan Arango, of the Colombian leftist party the Patriotic Union, was assassinated today. Armed groups have killed 500 leaders and activists of the party in the last two years. The party accuses paramilitary groups tied to the armed forces.

—Associated Press

1988

A narco New Year.

The drug traffickers bathe the new year in blood. Battling extradition to the U.S., they murder Colombia's attorney general and kidnap the son of a former president. (The Pope pleads for the rich kid's release.) When not laying waste to the government, the *narco-trafficantes* war among themselves. Death-squad killings and guerrilla attacks add to the national carnage. At the end of the month a headline in *El Tiempo* says, "January: 31 Days of Horror."

Called by name.

February is no better. "Another horrible month," says *El Tiempo*. But February's horror is startling even by Colombian standards. The Spanish wire service EFE files this report:

"BOGOTÁ—Twenty-five men, some with painted faces and others wearing hoods, but all dressed in civilian clothes, arrived in several cars and carrying automatic weapons and sophisticated radio-communication equipment at the town of Pinalito, 300 kilometers southeast of Bogotá.

"The men surrounded a cockfighting ring and rounded up some 60 spectators in the gallery. The men then used a list to call by name 27 of those present. Those called were made to enter the cockfighting ring, where they were machine-gunned. Twelve were killed and 15 wounded.

"The 12 killed were activists in the leftist Patriotic Union party. The Patriotic Union is

the third electoral force in the country. It was originated by the pro-Soviet Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)."

The war.

The Pinalito massacre takes place in the Eastern Plains, a region that lives on two products: cattle and coca—which is processed into cocaine.

I talk with the head of the local cattlemen's association. He was a famous general before his retirement, but now he's a critic of the armed forces. He says cocaine has corrupted the national police. He tells me a byzantine tale of dope and death squads.

He says that in the Eastern Plains, the police levy a tax on coca-growing peasants. The peasants are unhappy with this drain on their income, so they welcome guerrilla attacks on the police. The police retaliate by murdering peasants. This is what happened at the massacre of Penalito. Not strong enough to confront the FARC guerrillas, the police shot down their unarmed sympathizers in the Patriotic Union.

He has more. Cocaine traffickers, some of the biggest men in the business, are consolidating huge ranches in the Eastern Plains. This puts the traffickers up against the guerrillas, who got there first. The cocaine kings have declared war. They have raised up professional armies of paid killers, often with the help of the army. The mercenaries are trained on the cattle ranches of the narcos and then turned loose against the Patriotic Union.

At the door he grabs my arm. "Be careful how you use this information," he says.

El Mexicano.

The government has linked a top trafficker to a major political murder, the shooting of Patriotic Union chairman Jaime Pardo in October 1987. The suspect is a stocky man with a passion for Mexican mariachi bands, which is why he's called "El Mexicano."

El Mexicano has risen rapidly from rags to riches. Born to a humble family in a small farm town on the Bogotá savanna, he now sits on the directorate of the world's largest cocaine consortium, the Medellín Cartel. *Forbes* magazine says he is worth \$1.3 billion.

Two other Colombian traffickers are on *Forbes'* list of billionaires. The narco new rich have drug dollars to burn. They buy flashy adornments like soccer teams and fighting bulls, and they make blue-chip investments in Colombian industry, business, finance, agriculture, construction and real estate. The drug trade has pushed up a new social stratum, the cocaine capitalists. They loathe communists.

Crime and punishment.

BOGOTÁ, April 5, 1988—Hooded gunmen who killed 28 peasants in northern Colombia on Easter Sunday laughed as they shot down their victims at random, a survivor of the massacre was quoted as saying.

—Reuters

Headline in *El Tiempo*, Sept. 7, 1988:

WARRANTS FOR THE MASSACRES IN URBABA AND CORDOBA

ARREST WARRANTS FOR THREE FROM THE MEDELLIN CARTEL, FOUR MILITARY OFFICIALS AND 11 CIVILIANS

THE JUDGE HAS LEFT THE COUNTRY

The values of capitalism.

There is no easy way for a journalist, especially an American, to talk to the traffickers, but I make contact with one of their lawyers.

I expect to find him living in opulence, but his house is in a middle-class neighborhood, and his carpets are seedy. Behind his desk is a photo of his graduating class at a second-rate law school. I call him "doctor." He calls me "journalist."

He says he has been authorized to pass on a message to my government: the narcos want peace. They will retire from the drug trade and put an end to the industry if Washington will ease up on extradition and call off the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

The DEA hunts the narcos like dogs, says the lawyer, but the narcos are admirable businessmen and the "cultivator of capitalist values." That makes them our natural allies against communism, he says. Hasn't Washington noticed that everywhere in Latin America drug traffickers are "in the vanguard of the dirty war"?

Danse macabre.

The candles and fireworks last night reminded me that today is the Day of the Immaculate Conception. I first came to Colombia exactly three Decembers ago, when I was drawn to the Palace of Justice like a moth to the flame.

Only now are workers tearing down the burned-out hulk of the Palace of Justice building. Other changes have come more quickly. Death is now a presence that raises little comment. Massacres have moved off the front page of *El Tiempo*. Even the Patriotic Union's own newspaper puts the murders of party members on its inside pages.

Efforts to provoke awareness are ignored and even feared. Following a small massacre last week (only seven dead), a group of veiled, black-robed dancers swayed through the grounds of the University of Antioquia, leaving behind a pile of real human bones. This classical *danse macabre* was misunderstood as a warning of impending attack. Frightened students abandoned the campus.

Signs of hope.

Today, December 10, the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra performs a concert commemorating the 40th anniversary of the U.N.'s Declaration of Human Rights. A few moments before the musicians pick up their instruments the presidential councilor for human rights rises to give a short speech. (The councilor is a respected historian, and he is politically well-connected.)

He says that despite the difficult situation in the world there are hopeful signs of peace. For example, the two superpowers have agreed to limit nuclear arms. As for Colombia, the country is suffering undeniable violence, he says, but there are hopeful signs here, as well. He says that, and then he sits down.

Postscript.

"Nothing abnormal is happening in Colombia. Outbreaks of violence have existed throughout the last 30 years."

—President Virgilio Barco, May 27, 1988

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Merrill Collett is a freelance foreign correspondent who covers the Andean region from his base in Venezuela. In addition to *In These Times*, he writes regularly for the *Washington Post*, *The Nation* and *National Public Radio*.

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NEW YORK

February 11

Free brunch at the Plaza. February 11, 1989 there will be an action against homelessness at the Trump-owned Plaza Hotel. This ongoing soup kitchen at the fountain will include celebrity speakers, speakers from the homeless community, and a street theatre piece featuring Donald and Ivana themselves. The Trumps will be asked to donate a mere 1.3% of their net worth to specific organizations which are developing housing for the homeless. This action is being sponsored by a group of people concerned about homelessness and active in various groups developing housing. Organizational meetings are being held in shelters to involve members of homeless community. Meet at 1:00 p.m., at the fountain (5th Avenue and 59th Street). Please bring food if you are able. For more information, call (212) 242-0302.

NEW YORK

February 17-19

"Demanding Democracy—The Struggle Continues," Democratic Socialists of America Youth Section Winter Conference, Feb. 17-19, 1989, Columbia University, New York. Join Ruth Messinger, Michael Harrington, Philip Agee, Shakoor Aljuwani, Barbara Ehrenreich, Irving Howe and student and youth activists from across the country to discuss issues such as reproductive freedom, campus racism and foreign policy. Housing provided. Call Elissa McBride at (212) 962-0390. Pre-registration \$20, IDS Youth Conference, 15 Dutch St. #500, New York, NY 10038.

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JAN. 31 **SOLD OUT** OLD MALL PARKING LOT B
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FEB. 3 **GOOD TIX STILL AVAIL.** MEL'S ICE PIT

FUN FOR OLD-TIMERS
AND YOUNG WHIPPER-
SNAPPERS ALIKE!!!

"CARTOON-THEMED TOURING ICE-SHOWS ARE YOUR BEST ENTERTAINMENT VALUE"

The slaves remember

The following excerpts come from *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remember*, a new oral history edited by James Mellon (Weidenfeld & Nicolson). Culled from thousands of interviews done by members of the Federal Writers' Project in the mid-'30s, these ex-slaves' remembrances resonate all too powerfully today. These real-life tales of horror offer a chilling counterpart to the easy amnesia of the '80s and the resurgent racism of this mean decade. If we forget who we are, who can we be?

MY MOTHER, SHE DIDN'T WORK IN THE field. She worked at a loom. She worked so long and so often that once she went to sleep at the loom. Her master's boy saw her and told his mother. His mother told him to take a whip and wear her out. He took a stick and went out to beat her awake. He beat my mother till she woke up. When she woke up, she took a pole out of the loom and beat him nearly to death with it. He hollered, "Don't beat me no more, and I won't let 'em whip you." She said, "I'm goin' to kill you. These black titties sucked you, and then you come out here to beat me." And when she left him, he wasn't able to walk.

And that was the last I seen of her until after Freedom. She went out and got an old cow that she used to milk—Dolly, she called it. She rode away from the plantation, because she knew they would kill her if she stayed.

—Ellen Cragin

MY HUSBAND SAID THERE WAS A FAMILY named Gullendin which was mighty hard on their niggers. He said ole Missis Gullendin, she'd take a needle and stick it through one of their nigger women's lower lip and pin it to the bosom of her dress, and the woman would go roun' all day with her haid drew down thataway, and slobberin'. Ole Missis Gullendin done her that-away lots of times. There was knots on her lip where the needle had been stuck in it. Me, I don't b'lieve I coulda stood that no time, without goin' crazy.

—Mrs. Thomas Johns

IHAVE HEARD A HEAP OF PEOPLE SAY THEY wouldn't take the treatment what the slaves took, but they woulda took it or death. If they had been there, they woulda took the very same treatment.

—Anonymous

MY MOSTER WOULD PUT SLAVES IN A calaboose at night to be whipped de next morning. He always limited de lashes to five hundred. After whipping dem, he would rub pepper and salt on deir backs,

where whipped, and lay dem before de fire until blistered, and den take a cat, and hold de cat, and make him claw de blisters, to burst dem.

—Robert Burns

INEVER HAD NO WHITE FOLKS THAT WAS good to me. We all worked just like dogs, and had about half enough to eat, and got whupped for everything. Our days was a constant misery to us. I know lots of niggers that was slaves and had a good time, but we never did. Seems hard that I can't say anything good for any of my white folks, but I sho' can't.

Old Master stayed drunk all the time. I reckon that is the reason he was so fetched mean. My, how we hated him! He finally killed hisself drinking, and I remember Old Mistress called us in to look at him in his coffin. We all marched by him slow-like, and I jest happened to look up and caught my sister's eye, and we both jest natchelly laughed. Why shouldn't we? We was glad he was dead. It's a good thing we had our laugh, fer Old Mistress took us out and whupped us with a broomstick. She didn't make us sorry, though.

—Annie Hawkins

AT DEM SALES, DEY WOULD PUT A NIGGER on de scales and weigh him, and den de biddin' would start. If he wuz young and strong, de biddin' would start round a hundred and fifty dollars, and de highest bidder got de nigger. A good young breedin' 'oman brung two thousand dollars easy, 'cause all de marsters wanted to see plenty of strong healthy chillun comin' on, all de time. Cyarpenters and bricklayers and blacksmiths brung fancy prices, from three thousand to five thousand dollars, sometimes. A nigger what warn't no more'n jes' a good field hand brung 'bout two hundred dollars.

—Willis Cofer

IMEMBERS WHEN THEY PUT ME ON THE auction block. They pulled my dress down over my back to my waist, to show I ain't gashed and slashed up. That's to show you ain't a mean nigger.

—Lu Perkins

IHAD A BROTHER, JIM, WHO WUZ SOLD TER dress young Missus fer her weddin'. De tree am still standin' whar I set under an' watch 'em sell Jim. I set dar an' I cry an' cry, specially when dey puts de chains on him an' carries him off. An' I ain't neber felt so lonesome in my whole life. I ain't neber hyar from Jim since, an' I wonder now, sometimes, iffen he's still livin'.

—Ben Johnson

MY MOTHER WAS SOLE AND TOOK FROM my father when I was jes' a few months old. I never seed him till I was six. I had to be tole who he was. He saw

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my mother for de first time in six years in de fiel's where we was a-working. Dey didn't know how to ac' or what to say. Dey seemed kinda let down, lak. You see, he had married ag'in, an' my mother had, too.

—Foster Weathersby

IWUZ TOO LITTLE TO HAVE ANY SENSE. When dat man bought me—dat Mr. Henry—he put me up in de buggy to take me off. I kin see it all right now, and I say to Mama and Papa, "Good-bye, I'll be back in de mawnin'." And dey feel sorry fer me and say, "She don't know what happenin'."

—Janie Satterwhite

SOMETIME, NIGGER FOLKS GIT SO MIXED up about who kin to who, they marry their own sister or brother. Sometime, when a nigger marry his sister, they find out this way. One night, they gits to talking. She say, "One time, my brother had a fight and he get a awful scar over his left ear. It long and slick, and no hair grow there." He say, "See this scar over my left ear? It long and slick, and no sign of a hair." Then, she say, "Lawd God, help us po' niggers. You is my brother." It happen like that. Many a time I see it, and that the gospel truth.

—Richard Carruthers

ONE BOY WAS TRADED OFF FROM HIS mother when he was young, an' after he was grown, he was sold back to de same marster an' married to his own mother.

—Wesley Burrell

A new oral history presents the ugly side of the way we were.

THE LAST WHIPPING OLD MIS' GIVE ME SHE tied me to a tree and—oh, my Lord!—she whipped me that day. That was the wors' whipping I ever got in my life. I cried and bucked and hollered, until I couldn't. I give up for dead, and she wouldn't stop. I stop crying and said to her, "Old Mis', if I were you and you were me, I wouldn't beat you this way." That struck Old Mis's heart, and she let me go, and she did not have the heart to beat me anymore.

—Sarah Douglas

IMET MANY RUNAWAY SLAVES. SOME WAS trying to get north and fight for de freeing of they people. Others was jes' runnin' 'way 'cause dey could. Many of dem didn't had no idea where dey was goin', and told of havin' good marsters. But, one and all, dey had a good strong notion to see what it was like to own your own body.

—Edward Lycurgas

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